And God Knows the Martyrs

MARTYRDOM *and* VIOLENCE *in* JIHADI-SALAFISM

NATHAN S. FRENCH

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Acknowledgments

Given that this is a project researching contemporary Jihadi-Salafi movements, I feel I must open with an acknowledgment of the tremendous human suffering such movements have inflicted across the globe. Iraqi, Afghan, Syrian, Egyptian, Saudi, Yemeni, Malian, Nigerian, Somali, British, Turkish, Australian, Chinese, French, and American citizens—and many, many others—continue to suffer as a result of the violence of Jihadi-Salafis and the subsequent wars waged against them. The global Muslim community, in particular, has borne the brunt of this violence at the hands of those whose faith is unrecognizable to them. At the same time, millions of refugees and internally displaced persons live in fear of the violent attacks and wars of which Jihadi-Salafis have been part. As a researcher, I watched in horror as Steven Sotloff, Khaled al-Asaad, James Wright Foley, Peter Abdul-Rahman Kassig, Alan Henning, David Haines, Kenji Goto, Haruna Yukawa, Muath al-Kasasbeh, and countless others were executed. I remember the sadness of hearing of Kayla Mueller's death. I await news of the safety of John Cantile and other prisoners of ISIS. I continue to mourn the treatment of the Iraqi Yazidi community and know that there will be no peace without justice. The voices of those affected are largely silent in this study, but they are not forgotten. May they all find peace.

This project began as a dissertation with the same name, produced with the generous support of a Regent's Fellowship from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and its Department of Religious Studies. Although not all of the products of our conversations appear in these pages, I am grateful to the members of my committee—Juan Campo, Racha El Omari, and Thomas Carlson—for their generous assistance and thoughtful critiques of a project that at times felt overwhelming. I remain continually in the debt of my friend and dissertation advisor, Ahmad A. Ahmad, for his relentless energy and vision for this project. Without his insistence on rigorous reading, analysis, and sustaining encouragement, I am not sure this project would ever have been completed. Finally, although Roger Friedland was not a member of my committee, his work on religion, nationalism, and sexuality and our

conversations during a seminar covering the same themes were constant companions as I sat down to draft the fifth chapter of this volume.

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Following the completion of the dissertation, the study of Jihadi-Salafism changed considerably. All of the work on the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) in this volume represents a significant revision and addition to my original project. None of that work would have been possible without the generous support of the College of Arts and Science at Miami University. In particular, I want to thank the Provost's Office, the Dean of the College of Arts and Science, and the Office of the Advancement of Research and Scholarship for their support for this project during my time there.

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The roots of this project began with faculty in the Department of Religion at Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, where I studied under the guidance of W. David Hall as part of a John C. Young Scholars project on the ideas of al-Qaʿida and Usama bin Ladin. Those roots deepened at Washington University in St. Louis, where Ahmet Karamustafa, Asad Ahmed, and Nancy Reynolds

taught me an incredibly valuable lesson: to always pursue the depth and full richness of Islamic mysticism, Islamic theology, and Middle East history.

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To journalists and reporters, both amateur and professional, without your work and drive to pursue the truth, our understanding of the day-to-day events and details forming the phenomenon of Jihadi-Salafism would not exist. You risk your lives daily to report the story, and we scholars cannot thank you enough.

Finally, no part of this volume would be complete without an acknowledgment of the sacrifices of my family—especially my mom, my dad, and my partner. They know all too well the toll this study has taken and have been a constant source of inspiration, encouragement, and support. I dedicate this book to my brilliant son, ENF. May our wars and struggles never become yours.

A Note on Transliteration, Translation, and Sourcing

All Arabic terms and phrases in this book were transliterated according to the conventions of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (*IJMES*). The *IJMES* style does permit the removal or reduction of diacritics for varying reasons. Following the *IJMES* convention, words that are found in *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* are not treated as technical terms and are therefore neither italicized nor given diacritics. So, for example, following the *IJMES* Word List online, jihad, mufti, mujahidin, and shaykh will not receive diacritical marks in a given sentence. However, if these terms appear as part of a translated quote, the Arabic transliteration that I provide will include these terms with all marks as they appeared in the original text. Words such as Qurʾan, Shariʿa, and ʿulamaʾ, for example, will retain the *ʿayn* and the hamza (with an exception for an initial hamza). Following a precedent from biblical studies, which uses the lowercase for the adjectival form of "Bible" as "biblical," the adjectival form of "Qurʾan" will be written as "qurʾanic." The titles of organizations will not be italicized and will follow English capitalization rules. Departing slightly from the *IJMES* convention, I have chosen to add an "s" for plurals to some Arabic terms, such as, for example, "fatwas" as opposed to *fatāwā*, to assist the general reader.

In the case of publications in English by particular authors or the direct quote of an Arabic term that has been transliterated in an al-Qaʿida or ISIS publication, I have retained the English transliteration preferred by that author or source. Departing slightly from the *IJMES* recommendation to remove diacritical marks from all personal names, place names, and the titles of books and articles, these will be included in the notes and bibliography for Arabic language resources to assist researchers. To facilitate general readers, however, I have removed full diacritics from names and titles within the body of the text.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine, and I accept responsibility for any inaccuracies or errors. Where possible, I have cross-referenced names of the figures discussed to ensure accurate transliteration; however, for some names, there is no clear agreement on the correct transliteration

(e.g., Hamud bin ʿUqlaʾ al-Shuʿaybi). If I rely on a translation from another author, I will make note of my debt in the endnotes.

Given the challenge and nuance of qurʾanic translation, however, I rely on the expert work of *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Caner K. Dagli, Maria Massi Dakake, Joseph B. Lumbard, and Mohammed Rustom (New York: HarperCollins, 2015) for all qurʾanic translations in this text and in the appendixes. I hope that diligent readers without Arabic and unfamiliar with Islamic exegetical traditions will pursue additional qurʾanic commentaries to compare to the Jihadi-Salafi citations. The *Study Quran* provides an adequate starting point.

Equally, there are many stylistic choices for citing from collections of narrations (hadith) containing the example (Sunna) of Muhammad. Following the initial citation of a collection, narrations will be cited in the following fashion: name, collection, volume, page (hadith number), for example: Al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, vol. 4, 180 (no. 2399).

Finally, among the numerous challenges of Jihadi-Salafi sources is the preservation of digital materials that are hosted on both militant and nonmilitant URLs. The Jihadi-Salafi sources in this project come from the Minbar al-Tawhid wa-l-Jihad of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi (b. 1959), Aaron Zelin's Jihadology archive, Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi's personal archive of ISIS documents online, and the Internet Archive, unless otherwise noted. At the time of this writing, all materials were available at the URL provided, but to ensure source continuity and to preserve these materials, I maintain a personal collection in reserve.

All errors in this book are mine.

Glossary

amīr A term suggesting the title of a political or military figure acting variously as a commander, governor, or prince, often used in the phrase *amīr al-muʿminīn*, "commander of the faithful."

al-amr bi-l-maʿruf wa-nahy ʿan al-munkar "To command the right and to forbid the wrong," the idea that Muslims have a fundamental legal obligation to ensure that God's law is maintained and that what threatens it is removed.

ʿaqīda Doctrinal creed, the essential principles of belief.

bidʿa Innovation, often seen as deviant or heretical innovation, as when used by Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab, for example, in his argument that Sufis have corrupted Islam with impious innovations not found in the Qurʾan and Sunna.

dawla A "state," may refer to the physical territory of a state, a state of mind, an epoch, or a political "turn," as in a change of circumstances.

dīn Often translated as "religion" but can carry the broader etymological meaning of a debt or obligation to God realized through one's beliefs and practices in daily life.

diya The "blood money" owed by one to another as a result of negligent violence.

dunyā The material world, often contrasted with *dīn*.

fatwa A nonbinding juridical decision authored by a mufti that often attempts to provide legal guidance on both known and unknown legal questions.

fiqh Islamic jurisprudence of numerous methods and forms, the attempt by Muslim jurists and jurisconsults to apply the principles of the Shariʿa.

Hadith The narrations recording the sayings and actions of Muhammad, his companions, and his followers (see also Sunna).

ḥākimiyya Sovereignty, used by Jihadi-Salafis to argue, on the basis of *tawḥīd*, that ultimate sovereignty in any political, social, or economic system must reside with God alone.

ḥalāl That which is permitted.

ḥarām That which is forbidden.

hijra Migration or emigration, originally refers to the emigration of Muslims in Muhammad's community to either Abyssinia or Medina.

ḥukm Within jurisprudence (*fiqh*), a ruling or judgment within jurisprudence (plural *aḥkām*).

ijmāʿ The consensus of the jurists used as a principle for legal reasoning, in particular for Jihadi-Salafis, the consensus of the companions (*ṣaḥāba*) of Muhammad.

ijtihād Although its meaning varies over time, in general, in Sunni Islamic legal theory, a description of an independent juristic interpretation drawn from the Qurʾan, Sunna, the consensus of the Muslim community (*ijmāʿ*), or analogical interpretation (*qiyās*).

ʾilla The *ratio legis*, the rationale offered by a mufti that ties a new legal question to a prior legal precedent.

imān Belief, typically in Islam, and the acceptance of the truth of God, the prophets, angels, the Day of Judgment, divine revelations, and predestination (*qadr*).

inghimās Immersion, referred to by Jihadis as the act of immersing oneself, often during an attack, for example, infiltrating an overwhelming enemy force regardless of the odds of survival.

intiḥār The act of self-killing, suicide (sometimes used interchangeably with *qatl al-nafs*).

iṣlāḥ Reform, often understood by various contemporary Muslims to refer to a reinterpretation of sacred texts and laws to align with modernity.

istishhād Martyrdom or martyrdom-seeking behavior; those engaging in "suicide bombings" are referred to as engaging in *ʿamaliyyāt istishhādiyya*, or "martyrdom operations" or "martyrdom-seeking operations."

jāhiliyya Ignorance, originally used by early Muslim historians to refer to the period of history of the Arabian Peninsula prior to the revelations of the Qurʾan to Muhammad; however, beginning with Abu-l-ala Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb, the term was used to describe the non-Muslim contemporary world; sometimes considered derogatory.

jihād In Arabic, to struggle or exert great effort, in the Islamic legal tradition used to describe theories of warfare and fighting.

kāfir A disbeliever, one guilty of *kufr*.

khilāfa Caliphate or caliphal authority, the idea that the Sunni community has been granted the capacity to name God's vice-regent (*khālifa*, caliph) to govern on earth.

kufr Disbelief, from the Arabic root *k-f-r* suggesting ingratitude and particularly ingratitude to God for what has been created.

madhhab A method of Islamic legal interpretation, a legal school, or a way, manner, or method of acting or conduct, used to refer to one of the predominant four Sunni legal schools: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafiʿi, or Hanbali (plural *madhāhib*).

maṣlaḥa Communal benefit or communal welfare, at times used as a principle for legal interpretation.

milla A community differentiated on the basis of its religion.

minhāj Methodology; for Jihadi-Salafis, a *minhāj* represents the methodological interpretation and application of their creed (*ʿaqīda*) within the world.

mufti A jurisconsult whose legal rulings (fatwas) are nonbinding, case-specific acts of legal interpretation, different from a judge (*qāḍī*) whose pronouncements are final and binding.

muhājir One who emigrates, originally a Muslim who emigrated to either Abyssinia or Medina in the time of Muhammad (plural *muhājirūn, muhājirīn*).

Murjiʾa Those agreeing to practice postponement (*irjāʾ*) on the sin of a believer, originally a group emerging out of a debate with the Khariji on the status of the grave sinner, used by Jihadis to describe Muslims unwilling to implement *takfīr*.

mushrik One guilty of the sin of polytheism or assigning partners to God (see *shirk*).

nafs Self, soul, spirit.

niyya Intention.

al-qaḍāʿ wa-l-qadr The idea of God's predestination of events and God's will and capacity to act to determine their course.

qāḍī A judge whose legal rulings are binding, different from a mufti, whose legal rulings are not.

qatl (qitāl) Killing or fighting.

qatl al-nafs Literally, "the killing of the self," or to complete by suicide.

qiyās Analogical (syllogistic) reasoning, one of the four principles (*uṣūl*) of Sunni *fiqh*.

Salaf Predecessors, sometimes expressed with the honorific *al-salaf al-ṣāliḥīn* ("the pious predecessors"), the collective total of the companions (*ṣaḥāba*) of Muhammad, the followers (*tābiʿun*), and those generations following them.

ṣaḥāba The companions of Muhammad, including the first converts to Islam in Mecca, as well as the emigrants (*muhājirūn*) to Medina and those in Medina who assisted them (the *anṣār*).

shahīd Martyr, from the root *sh-h-d* in Arabic, meaning "to witness" (plural *shuhādāʾ*).

Shariʿa Islamic law considered to be the infallible law of God; Muslim jurists identify five objectives (*maqāṣid*) of the Shariʿa: the preservation of life, religion, reason, lineage, and property.

shirk The sin of associating partners with God or denying God's oneness; one guilty of *shirk* is a *mushrik* (plural *mushrikūn, mushrikīn*) and is considered guilty of one of the worst sins.

Sunna The collective whole of Muhammad's sayings and actions, considered a source of law; two collections—referred to as the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhari and the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim—are recognized as canonical by Sunni Muslims; other collections, arranged according to content and chain of transmission, include those of Abu Dawud, Ibn Hanbal, Malik, and Tirmidhi.

tābiʿīn The "followers," or the generation following those of Muhammad and his companions (the *ṣaḥāba*).

tābiʿ tābiʿīn The "followers of the followers," or the generation following the *tābiʿīn*, and the final generation among the generations forming the Salaf.

ṭaghūt Literally, "idolatry," used by Jihadi-Salafis to describe contemporary non-Muslim governments or those Muslim governments guilty of tyrannical, non-Islamic governance.

takfīr The pronouncement of another Muslim as ceasing to be Muslim on account of acts of disbelief (*kufr*), sometimes referred to as "excommunication" or proclaiming a Muslim "anathema."

tattarus To shield someone or something with something else, sometimes referred to as the "question of the shield" or the *turs* question within legal considerations of the rights of those within the shield; related to *turs*, "shield."

tawḥīd The assertion and affirmation of the oneness and unity of God; this is often subdivided into three types of *tawḥīd* by Jihadi-Salafis: *tawḥīd al-rubūbiyya, tawḥīd al-uluḥiyya*, and *tawḥīd al-asmāʾ wa-l-ṣifāt*; of these, the first, *tawḥīd al-rubūbiyya*, emphasizes the supremacy of God's lordship over all creation, while the second, *tawḥīd al-uluḥiyya*, affirms the unity of God's divinity and is often seen as that which excludes those who would assign partners or progeny to God; the third, *tawḥīd al-asmāʾ wa-l-ṣifāt*, emphasizes the unity of God's names and attributes.

turs Shield (see *tattarus*).

ʿulāmāʾ A general term used to refer to scholars possessing training in the religious sciences and Islamic law.

umma The global Islamic community.

uṣūl al-fiqh Refers to the sources of jurisprudence.

al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ Roughly, "loyalty and disavowal," to affirm and maintain affinity for what was revealed by God and God's messenger Muhammad and to avoid that which opposes both.

zuhd Renunciative traditions involving material and spiritual ascetical practices to facilitate affiliation with the divine.

Introduction

Jihadi-Salafism, Theodicy, and the Renunciation of Suffering

Abu Hurayra said, on the authority of the Messenger of God, may God's blessing and peace be upon him, "God knows best who struggles in His cause and God knows best who is wounded in his path." —Muhammad bin Ismaʿil al-Bukhari[1]

Anas bin Malik said, on the authority of the Messenger of God, may God's blessing and peace be upon him: "Truly, every community [*umma*] has a practice of monasticism [*rahbāniyya*], and the practice of monasticism of this *umma* is struggle in the path of God [*jihād fī sabīl Allāh*]." —ʿAbd Allah ibn al-Mubarak[2]

"We detest naming these 'suicide operations,' but likewise, we do not call these martyrdom-seeking operations. . . . We ask God to place them among the ranks of the martyrs. . . . If they were undertaken by Muslims fighting in God's cause, then the divine law considers it proper and agreeable to name these operations, 'jihadi operations,' because they are among the heroic actions of jihad that heal the hearts of a believing people." —Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi[3]

Blood, a Caliphate, and "The Ascetical Path of Truth"

As the black- and desert-camouflage-clad fighters of the self-declared Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) swept across eastern Syria and northern Iraq in 2014, they brought with them celebratory songs, which extolled the virtues of their forthcoming caliphate and exhorted the faithful to join their *jihād fī*

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sabīl Allāh, a struggle in the cause of God. Online media outlets affiliated with ISIS, such as al-Iʿtisam Media, Ajnad Media, and Fursan al-Balagh, spread these songs to a global audience, with images of the triumphant fighters, their index fingers raised proclaiming the one true God, in quick cuts reminiscent of a Hollywood action-film trailer. One of the earliest videos published by al-Iʿtisam, titled "The Land of the Living," featuring quotes from Jihadi-Salafis living and dead, opened with an oratory chant, called a *nashīd*, exhorting the faithful:

> My jihad is my life [*Jihādī ḥayātī*]
> My life is jihad [*Ḥayātī jihādī*]
> My life is flourishing [*Ḥayātī namāʾ*]
> My life is a devotion [*Ḥayātī fidāʾ*]
>
> They want to murder me [*Yuridūna qatlī*]
> And my murder will be my life [*Wa-qatlī ḥayātī*]
> Hasten to the nourishment of the Most Exalted and the Qurʾan! [*Halumma li-ʿaysh al-ʾulā wa-l-hudā*]
>
> Hasten armies! Armies of the tyrants! [*Halumma junūd junūd al-ṭughāt*]
> Hasten to kill me on behalf of the Highest of the Heavens! [*Halumma li-qatlī li-aʿalū al-samāʾ*][4]

Although the reciter of the *nashīd* does not explicitly mention that he seeks martyrdom (*istishhād*), the lyrics make an explicit call to the listener: the most authentic form of faith, and the most authentic expression of that faith in physical action, is struggle in God's path. The narrator dismisses those who would deem this a mere act of violence—the physical motions of stabbing, shooting, and launching weapons. Fighting, here, is what brings life and nourishes the soul. The word *fidāʾ* carries not just the meaning of devotion but also that of a ransom, if not a sacrifice to God. The *nashīd* reveals a debt to be paid. One must relinquish oneself to the fight ahead as part of a righteous transaction with the divine that will transform both oneself and one's world.

The next cut of the video signals a transformation. A second narrator recites a new *nashīd*, this one published originally by Ajnad Media as "My People, Dawn Has Appeared (*Ummatī qad lāḥa fajr*)!"

> The Islamic State was established by the blood of the truthful!
> The Islamic State was established by the jihad of the pious!

They submitted their souls truly, with steadfast conviction,
So that the religion [*dīn*] may be established, the law of the Lord of the Worlds [*sharʿ rabb al-ʿālamīn*].[5]

The two narrators signal to the listener the connection shared among individual faith and practice and the broader political project of Jihadi-Salafi movements: a pious and righteous community, affirmed by those willing to sell their souls (*anfūs*, sing. *nafs*) in a devotional transaction to God, opening the possibility of cultivating God's religion (*dīn*) within a fully realized and functional state.

As the second *nashīd* continues in the background of the video, the connections among personal piety, self-renunciation, and state-building become more explicit:

My *umma,* God is our master, so give of your blood generously
For victory will not return except by the blood of the martyrs [*bi-dimāʾ al-shuhadāʾ*] . . .
They have offered their souls to God, and for the religion there is devotion [*dīn fidāʾ*]

Those offering their souls, whose blood is a transactional and devotional offering, nourish the flourishing state. The reciter of the *nashīd* concludes by affirming that these are the "men who have forsaken the world [*dunyā*] and attainted immortality." There is a stark contrast made here between the wants and needs of the material world and the self-discipline demanded by God's law (*sharʿ*) and religion (*dīn*). According to both narrators, the latter emerges into a full and rich existence through a believing community. Those in the community, all of them strugglers—mujahidin—in God's cause, recognize one fundamental, if not existential, truth: one must renounce oneself and the world in order to transform the world. Such renunciation creates the possibility for the arrival of a divinely guided and ordered state that will protect believers from all forms of oppression and corruption.

In subsequent films in the series, the actions of those willing to practice this self-renunciation were connected to a broader understanding of the nature of the evil and suffering faced by the global Muslim community and those for whom ISIS's leadership claims it fights. Often this connection is established implicitly, gestured to by the citation of passages from the Qurʾan. Consider, for example, the second film in the series, which opens with this qurʾanic recitation:

> God has promised those among you who believe and perform righteous deeds that He will surely make them vice-regents [*la-yastakhlifannahum*] upon the earth, as He caused those before them to be vice-regents, and that He will establish for them their religion, which He has approved for them, and that He will surely change them from a state of fear to [one of] security. They will worship Me, not ascribing any partners unto Me. And whosoever disbelieves thereafter, it is they who are iniquitous.[6]

The connection intended by the narrator citing the passage is clear. In his interpretation, if one performs righteous deeds, which for him include struggle in God's path, then one will receive, as the verse indicates, a vice-regency (*khilāfa*) as reward and protection. Historically, the term *khilāfa* described the institution of the caliphate. Here, in pursuit of this caliphate, one must fight while protecting the divine unicity of God. Faith, theology, and politics coalesce.

Many ISIS authors locate this coalescence within a broader Jihadi-Salafi genealogy. The clip switches to Usama bin Ladin (1957–2011) whose al-Qaʿida organization would openly fight ISIS years later but whom ISIS lauds as a respected figure, a shaykh. Discussing the establishment of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) in 2007, Bin Ladin states that the establishment of the state was an individual duty and required pledges of obedience. As he continues, Bin Ladin notes the considerable national and popular forces arranged against ISI, including the United States of America, the Iraqi government, the Shiʿi militias, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Bin Ladin continues:

> I believe that those struggling [*mujāhidīn*] for the Islamic State of Iraq face these severe campaigns only because they are pursuing the ascetical path of truth [*tanassuk bi-l-ḥaqq*] and pledge themselves to the methodology [*manhaj*] of the Messenger, may God's blessings and peace be upon him.[7]

What Bin Ladin offers his listeners is a simple explanation of suffering. This explanation, a theodicy, confirms to the faithful that the suffering they endure at the hands of their enemies is a divine confirmation of the soundness of their attempts to live Islam as Muhammad (d. 632) and his companions and followers—collectively referred to as the *salaf*—intended. Within the qurʾanic passage, those who find their lives, property, and religion secured are those who affirm the oneness of God, who believe in God's messengers

and prophets, and who perform righteous deeds. As the qurʾanic recitation unfolds on film, scenes of victorious ISIS fighters, fingers and guns raised, appear. It is the imagination of a rationale for their good fortune: by clinging to what God has revealed, ISIS has been granted by God vice-regency, a caliphate (*khilāfa*), in return, just as God once did for Muhammad and the earliest communities of Muslims. To affirm the truth of this, the ISIS clip cites Bin Ladin, who argues that the reason this Islamic State of Iraq (and later al-Sham) faces such considerable hostility is the same reason Muhammad and his community at Mecca and Medina faced such hardship: the enemies of God recognize the truth and power of the prophetic methodology, which is the denial of oneself and one's desires to secure the implementation of God's divine plan in practice.

Enemies of God? Prophetic methodology? Blood? Suffering? What is to be done with such narratives? Often these narratives produced by Jihadi-Salafi movements are considered a secondary form of cultural production, meant to express anger and frustrations against disbelievers or to cause fear in others. Those who pursue Jihadi-Salafi narratives through the lens of social movement theory (SMT) argue that such narratives, if reduced to their constituent parts, allow researchers to understand how such movements mobilize human resources for political change. This study reconsiders these questions. It does so by turning to the question of suffering and what such suffering allows Jihadi-Salafi jurists to authorize within their understanding of the law.

Imagine, for the moment, two narratives of history. The first of these is a narrative of the history of Muhammad and the earliest community of faithful Muslims. This community, gifted with God's revelation—the Qurʾan—found itself beset by enemies on all sides: polytheists, hostile tribes, and tyrannical empires. The second narrative, the one shared by Bin Ladin and the ISIS narrators, claims that it was the piety of this early community—made manifest by its willingness to suffer for the righteousness of God's revelation—that allowed it to have political success and triumph. Suffering is a test. According to Bin Ladin and the ISIS narrators, those who are impious suffer for following what displeases God and leads to degradation and corruption. For the pious, those who understand that they must give up their lives for God's revelation and law as Muhammad and the companions did, suffering offers a transaction. Renouncing all worldly comforts now and pursuing faith in God will lead to social, political, and economic power in this life and triumph in the next. The martyrs are those who understand this most of all.

Often studies of contemporary Jihadi-Salafis examine their sensational acts of violence, ranging from the events of September 11, 2001, to the gruesome beheading videos released by ISIS, to discern trends in their broader strategies and tactics. Here I begin with the Jihadi-Salafi approach to the question of evil and suffering in the world. Humans of all faiths and communities approach this question every day. Within the field of religious studies, following the conversations of theologians, this question and its answers fall under a single term, "theodicy." For Jihadi-Salafis, suffering is a form of divine interrogation or divine warning. If it is a test, suffering will drive the disbeliever to sin. For the faithful, suffering will lead to a form of self-renunciation to align one's soul with the will of God. This renunciation, which in religious studies is often labeled as an exercise of asceticism, is a way of taking control of one's suffering and from it finding agency, an ability to act and affirm the conditions of one's pain. In Jihadi-Salafi poetry, films, audio files, and even in their legal arguments justifying what many in the West call "suicide bombings" or what they, tellingly, call "martyrdom-seeking operations," a martyr, renouncing himself or herself in God's cause, is portrayed as a world-transforming example of piety who aligns this performance with the memory of the tradition of those earliest Muslim communities in order to bring about defeat to God's enemies and change the social and political circumstances of this world.

Martyrdom as a Self-Renunciation and Political Formation: A Thesis

Jihadi-Salafis, including those fighting for al-Qaʿida, ISIS, and their affiliates, did not create the idea of martyrdom (*istishhād*), nor were they the first to instrumentalize it as a tactic of warfare, a martyrdom-seeking operation (*ʿamaliyyāt istishhādiyya*). Many readers of this book who are familiar with the expansive literature on the manifestation of suicidal ideation and subsequent completion by suicide, and even casual followers of the news from Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan, are familiar with the numerous arguments of reporters, analysts, and researchers that attempt to set aside secondary concerns, such as religion, and explain these actions through psychological, economic, or sociopolitical conditions. For some, individuals undertake suicide bombings in response to the strain that emerges from failed states, from illiberal governments, or from a general lack of socioeconomic mobility and

employment possibilities. For others, suicide bombings are best explained as the last gasp of desperate populations seeking to overthrow colonial and neocolonial projects or the sad result of backward, illiberal religious conditioning.

This book is not a replacement for those studies. Instead, it is a complement. In the first chapter, I argue that Jihadi-Salafis, through their debates over matters of theology, law, and creed, are developing a legal tradition. Such a conversation begins with the volumes of pamphlets, tracts, nonbinding legal statements (fatwas), and books, not to mention the years of media materials, published by Jihadi-Salafi movements that present martyrdom operations as a logical, if exceptional, fulfillment of the Jihadi-Salafi theodicy. As I discuss in chapter 2, this theodicy emerges from the debates on matters of creed (*ʿaqīda*) and methodology (*minhāj*) published by Jihadi-Salafi authors, self-proclaimed jurisconsults (muftis), and by those seeking to rationalize the existence of evil and suffering within their world. There I describe how Jihadi-Salafis argue that the best response to this suffering is to pursue self-renunciation—acts of asceticism—in God's cause. Though I acknowledge that Jihadi-Salafism is itself characterized by fraught political movements debating a contentious ideology, I argue that these reflect ongoing meaning-making for Jihadi-Salafis.

In the third and fourth chapters, I argue that martyrdom-seeking operations (*al-amaliyyāt al-istishhādiyya*) for Jihadi-Salafi jurists are not made legitimate by materialistic social, political, or economic objectives but are instead framed, mindful acts of ascetical devotion. Martyrs perform a dual renunciation, first a renunciation of the desires of the soul and second the renunciation of a corrupting world. Both are undertaken out of sincere love for the divine. Such acts, in these arguments, help the faithful address the circumstances of their suffering and create the possibility for what Jihadi-Salafi authors consider the earliest modes of piety: either death as a martyr on the frontiers of the faith or, in the case of the project of ISIS, the construction of an Islamic state on earth. In short, the creed and methodology of Jihadi-Salafism frames for a global audience sociopolitical events within an explanatory narrative of suffering and then models to that same audience the necessary steps to take to transform the world.

Although often described by critics as premodern, medieval, or mindlessly brutal, this claim suggests otherwise. Jihadi-Salafis are distinctly and irrefutably modern. The emergence of their legal tradition (a subject of chapter 1), their displacement of the responsibility of salvation upon the

actions of the individual (the subjects of chapters 2 and 3), and even their utilitarian arguments (chapter 4) are hallmarks of modern debates on the role of law in daily life. In the case of ISIS, I argue in chapter 5 that its partisans instrumentalized the utility of self-renunciative martyrdom in order to open the possibility for creating a new state, drawing upon Max Weber's famous assertion that modern states claim a "monopoly on the use of violence." Jihadi-Salafi authors understand this and debate the methods that fighters must utilize to apply such violence, the objectives such violence should attain, and whether their fellow authors have the authority to make those legal demands.

Yet for Jihadi-Salafis, such operations remain exceptional modes of violence in two ways. First, Jihadis consider them to be the penultimate performance and embodiment of their creed and methodology. However, as I show in chapter 4, they also consider them to be a unique tactic, one established upon an idealized utilitarian logic that places the preservation of religion, one of the five objectives (*maqāṣid*) of God's divine law, the Shariʿa, ahead of the remaining four: the preservation of life (*ḥayāt*), reason (*ʿaql*), property (*māl*), and lineage (*nasab*). Yet where Jihadi-Salafis once argued that this elevation of religion above all other objectives was sufficient for the self-renunciation needed to transform the world, I argue in chapter 5 that the caliphal project of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (1971–2019) transforms those seeking martyrdom and self-renunciation into instruments of nation-building. Understanding the ties of theodicy, self-renunciation, and state formation within the Jihadi-Salafi creed (*ʿaqīda*) and methodology (*minhāj*) opens up the possibility of understanding the individual and organizational objectives of Jihadi-Salafis in the past and in the future, well past the collapse of any self-proclaimed caliphate.

Jihadi Culture and the Study of Religion: Martyrdom, Theodicy, and Self-Renunciation

There is a map of the world located in the examples from the ISIS *nashīd*s and Usama bin Ladin. The geography of this map is blurry, but a discerning eye can trace it. In this world, there is territory of belief, that over which the faithful have been granted vice-regency by God in the words of Bin Ladin, and, against it, a territory of disbelief, a land of tyrants seeking to destroy the faithful. The land of belief emerges only through two forms of struggle. First

there is the struggle against the enemy, who is described in the examples as "iniquitous" and "tyrannical." Then there is the struggle to perform righteous deeds as acts of devotion. These deeds seem self-renunciative and are a performance of what Bin Ladin calls "the methodology [*manhaj*]" of Muhammad. This is a world fraught with danger and dripping with blood.

For Jihadi-Salafis, their ability to fight back against the threat of local governments and Western culture to their communities requires a struggle (jihad) in the cause of God. The historical developments and manifestations of the terms jihad ("struggle"), *qitāl* ("fighting"), *ḥarb* ("war"), and *baghy* ("rebellion"), along with the necessity of spiritual values such as patience (*ṣabr*) to jihad, have been studied by Asma Afsaruddin, Michael Bonner, David Cook, Ahmed al-Dawoody, and Khaled Abou Fadl, among others.[8] In her framing of contemporary debates on jihad and martyrdom, Afsaruddin identifies Jihadi-Salafis as those who "emphasize the military aspect of *jihād* over all others and have foregrounded the combative *jihād* as a religious duty to be waged against those deemed in general to be a threat to the physical and spiritual well-being of Muslims."[9] Yet Cook, in his framing of such violence, argues that "*mujahidin* increasingly see themselves as the arbiters of what is right and what is wrong in jihad, and feel that their position as the staunchest defenders of Islam gives them the authority that the 'court' '*ulamāʾ* have abdicated."[10] Such authority to wage violence, he argues, is self-claimed and self-interpreted, motivated by a cynical desire for the utility of violence.

Jihadi-Salafi appropriations of Islamic legal and theological traditions are an ongoing challenge to analysis of contemporary Middle East politics and Islamic studies. For some researchers, such theological questions are best left alone, and the examples with which I opened this introduction are best read as narratives and instruments for resource mobilization. Individuals are called forth for martyrdom as part of the objectives of broader social movements. Using SMT, analysts argue that martyrdom-seeking operations draw upon religious, theological, and legal discourses as among several of the instruments mobilized by authorities seeking to identify like-minded allies, contend against opponents, and locate other forms of resources (e.g., finances, social capital, etc.) required to thrive amid fluctuating social and political circumstances.[11]

Other readers may frame the narratives of martyrdom-seeking operations by emphasizing the actors influenced by such discourses, what a software engineer might call the end user. Such studies on the phenomenon of suicide bombings will focus either on the motivations of the individuals who pursue

such violence on a case-by-case basis or on the contextual influences upon them. This often results in defenses of the rationality of the assailants (against the claim that they are "mad bombers"), while at times, however, evaluating their psychology for suggestions of clinical diagnoses.[12] Of course, suffering is viewed as a motivation for developing religious ideological motivations for such violence.[13] Other studies attribute the existence of such operations to US, Israeli, and other Western foreign-policy decisions.[14] Mia Bloom, for example, argues that contemporary terrorist groups "use suicide bombing under two conditions: when other terrorist or military tactics fail, and when they are in competition with other terrorists groups for financial support," a process she calls "outbidding."[15] Two of the larger bodies of literature, of which the works of Robert Pape and Assaf Moghadam are foundational, suggest that such attacks are responses to territorial invasion and the experiences of suffering and occupation caused by the same.[16] These theses are particularly common in relation to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and embargo of Gaza.[17]

I begin from a different position. I set aside the biographies of those pursuing martyrdom. As literature on Islamism suggests, the motivations for individuals to join Islamist or Jihadi-Salafi groups vary according to nation, origin, affiliation, and socioeconomic status.[18] I argue instead that Jihadi-Salafi discussions of martyrdom-seeking operations frame them as exemplary self-renunciative acts that are responses to a particular theodicy.

For those acquainted with the literature on strain theory and relative deprivation theory, the idea of theodicy may seem familiar. In conversations on politics of the contemporary Middle East—particularly in the post–Arab Spring era—theodicies might be understood as a form of framing meant to explain the relative failure or success of a social movement. Shadi Hamid, for example, argued that the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood engaged in acts of theodicy-making after the utter collapse of their sociopolitical objectives following the removal of Mohamed Morsi from power in Egypt in 2013.[19] Yet a theodicy is more than a rationale. A theodicy, in short, addresses the question of human suffering and evil but, more broadly, structures the world and our place within it by questioning the existence of a God or gods and the possibility of justice in a world marred by the injustices, suffering, and inequalities that characterize the existence of evil and the shortcomings of human political, social, and economic institutions. This definition emerges, in part, from the term itself, first transliterated into the French *théodicée* by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1816), from the Greek words for "God"

(*θεός, theos*) and for "trial," "judgment," or "justice," (*δίχη, dike*) in his *Essais de Theodicée* (1710).[20] For Leibniz and his later Christian commentators, a theodicy, as the neologism formed by the combination of the Greek words suggests, is foremost a query or judgment against God for the creation and persistence of evil in the world. It is also a meditation on the sublime justice of God made manifest through God's creation and God's judgment of creation. Finally—and especially for monotheistic traditions—underlying this unity of judgment and justice is a conviction of God's divine power and God's providence over creation.

Theodicies draw attention to several central questions of human experience: Why must the innocent suffer and the guilty succeed? Why are there seemingly incurable illnesses? Why must one group receive punishment while another goes free? Why must natural disasters befall the pious and the impious, the sinner and the saint? Why does one state, brutal and violent, gain power and authority over its weaker yet more sanctified foes? Theodicies may rationalize to an individual why there is evil in the world but may also take the form of explanations of collective suffering and offer guidance and counsel to the faithful for the avoidance of further suffering in this world and in the afterlife. In this way, a theodicy resembles a process of meaning-making that seeks to make sense of human action by modeling it within the world as it comes to appear.

Discussions of theodicy in Western philosophies of religion take multiple forms but often center on why one suffers individually within the world. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, questions of the providence of God over individual human affairs were often framed as critiques of the rationality of Christianity. David Hume (1711–1776), for example, proclaimed any attempt by apologists to defend the capacity of God's divine will to be absurd.[21] Leibniz, however, was less concerned with God's relationship to the individual than with God's relationship to the creation of the universe itself. These pursuits had long been shared by Muslim legists and theologians as well—most notably Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058–1111) and Taqi al-Din ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328)—and, most recently, Sherman Jackson.[22]

In the contemporary period, Jackson considers theodicies that have emerged as part of broader sociological questions on the nature of modernization, secularization, and modernity. Jackson is concerned with the question of race and divine justice. More broadly, however, Peter Berger, a sociologist of religion, views the old sacred theodicies as having collapsed under the weight of modernizing processes. As older arguments for God's justice lost

their ability to make sense of human suffering, communities and individuals pursued new meaningful approaches to reconcile themselves to new modernities.[23] As Western Enlightenment projects yielded an increasing rationalization of the world, the demand to reconcile expectations of a world waiting to be tamed by human rationality and industry clashed with the experience of a world that persistently caused suffering and pain. The Enlightenment, as German sociologist Max Weber described it, promised a comprehensive view of the world, a "meaningful cosmos."[24] Theodicies, Weber explained, existed throughout human history and across various religious systems of belief and practice. However, at their core and in all of their permutations, modern theodicies attempt to answer an inner, personal need for meaning in a world increasingly "disenchanted"—a term Weber uses to indicate that "one can, in principle, master all things by calculation."[25] In such a world, there is little need for a supernatural referent for good or evil occasions. The question, for Weber, simply becomes one that is uninteresting. Religion becomes incapable of providing a rationale grounding behavior and morality and therefore is reflective of primitive superstitions. For Berger, however, this proclaimed incapability introduces instability into social systems and, he concludes, gives rise to disordering forces—what he labels "anomie," following Émile Durkheim—that erode the former authorities and systems that once allowed the world to come forth as a comprehensive whole to the faithful.

Berger describes the culmination of this erosion by proclaiming the central product of modern social life to be "homelessness." By this, he does not refer to a biological need for shelter or a socioeconomic condition, but instead, he writes, it is the "general uncertainty, both cognitive and normative, brought about by the pluralization of everyday life and of biography in modern society."[26] The possession of a meaningful theodicy is one of the first casualties of this homeless world. To solve this dispossession, Berger argues, modern societies privatized meaning-making by segregating public and private institutions, thereby relying on individuals to secure meaning through private effort and self-discipline—a mode of secularization. For some communities of faith, however, losing control over the central institutions that once secured one's individual identity led to discontent. What if broader society no longer matched what one considered to be the "good life" or prevented what one considered "sinful life"? The result, he argues, might be the demand to form alternative institutions entirely.

Bin Ladin and the narrators from ISIS hint at this process of anomie in the above examples. Bin Ladin speaks of regaining vice-regency only after the faithful community understands the importance of restoring God's religion along the prophetic methodology. How should this restoration occur? Through the performance of the faithful. In the study of religion, one of the means by which communities have attempted to regain control of their world, restoring the rites and traditions that once gave the world order and sense, is through self-renunciation and asceticism. "Asceticism" is a term of Greek origin (*askesis, ἀσκήσις*)—a concept once affiliated with the training of athletes—but came to be understood as a mode of self-discipline or self-renunciation, most often found as a description of early Christian monasticism and, later, in discussions of Islamic mysticism, Buddhist monasticism, and the mental, physical, and spiritual practices of Hindu philosophical traditions.

I use "asceticism" differently here. Weber and Michel Foucault are among the more influential figures in twentieth-century scholarship to shift the term away from some form of desert hermetic practice or medieval cloister toward its Greek origins. Both differed on the proper role of asceticism in life. Weber divided ascetical practice into two ideal types: the "outer worldly" trajectory of Catholicism and other mystical traditions and the "inner worldly" practice of modern Calvinist Protestants.[27] Foucault, on the other hand, emphasized the body as the site of ascetical practice and the formation of sound ethical practice as part of the formation and performance of the self not for other-worldly but for this-worldly ideals.[28]

In his critique of Weber's and Foucault's approaches to asceticism, Richard Valantasis argues that both focused on formation as opposed to renunciation. Religions and cultures offer to the faithful symbols and institutions that maintain a world in which our actions possess true meaning and consequence. Foucault and Weber understood asceticism as a form of self-discipline preparing individuals for the rigors of participating within a community of faith, family, or a nation—any mode of social responsibility in a given community. Asceticism, in Valantasis's argument, emphasizes resistance to these dominant modes of socialization. Self-renunciative practices reflect the dissatisfaction with the dominant culture's dictation to the private citizen of the self-discipline required of the faithful in the modern world. An ascetic "creates more than a basic social identity or role, an articulated self, a persona, or a personality: the ascetic constructs an entirely new agency capable of functioning in a different and resistant way to the dominant culture that defines identity,

personality, and social functions from hegemonic power."[29] Thus, "by systematic training and re-retraining, the ascetic becomes a different person, molded to live in a different culture, trained to relate to people in a different manner, psychologically motivated to live a different life."[30] In a modern world, in which culture as that which orders the world is called into question—a process that Olivier Roy, in his description of the rise of "neo-fundamentalisms" against Western and Islamic political projects as "deculturation"—ascetical practices, Valantasis argues, become performances "resistant to an externally projected or subjectively experienced dominant social or religious context."[31] Such a new agency creates the possibility for resistance against the dominant culture and the possibility for a new inhabitable world.

By identifying discussions of renunciation (*zuhd*) within Jihadi-Salafi discussions of martyrdom-seeking found within their theological and legal debates, I am able to explore how this new ascetical agency is negotiated by Jihadi-Salafis as a performed memory of the tradition of the Salaf meant to create a new world. Much of this negotiation occurs in their texts debating their creed and methods. I consider this new ascetical agency, found within these texts, a form of subjectivity—a term I use following Foucault and Valantasis that evaluates the "martyr" underlying the martyrdom-seeking operation not as a specific person in history but instead as a subject, located in texts, films, poems, and art, whom Jihadi-Salafis ground within their memory of the tradition.[32]

To establish their precedents for self-renunciation, Jihadi-Salafi jurists turn to a specific canon of Islamic legal and theological traditions. In particular, they turn to the traditions of the Salaf—a term that includes the community of the Prophet Muhammad, his companions, and his followers. Within their legal arguments justifying a martyrdom-seeking operation, it is the tradition of the Salaf that Jihadi-Salafi jurists will use to secure the authority of their pronouncements. When Bin Ladin speaks of the "prophetic methodology" to be followed, he has connected the behaviors of his supporters in this contemporary world to the behaviors of Muslim communities from long before. All are considered renunciants. In tracing his history of asceticism, Gavin Flood argues that "ascetic traditions are the enactment of the memory of tradition, which is also the expression of cosmology, for tradition is understood as an expression of the cosmic structure."[33] For Bin Ladin and the ISIS narrators, the performance of the memory of tradition—an ascetical performance—opens the possibility of a renewal of the cosmos against the anomic forces of tyranny and oppression.

Noting their discussions of ʿAbd Allah ibn al-Mubarak (d. 797) and other early Muslim renunciants, I argue that Jihadi-Salafis present martyrdom operations as a performance of a memory of tradition meant to open the possibility for an alternative culture that will restore the world from the disorder inflicted upon it by disbelief. Some have read the Jihadi-Salafi struggle against such corruption as a cosmic war.[34] Rather than seeking a flight from the world to wage a battle between the cosmic forces of good and evil, I argue that Jihadi-Salafis work to perform and realize the transformative model of that used by the Salaf within this world. The subjectivity of the ideal—that figure to whom Jihadi-Salafi jurists will grant the agency to perform the memory of the tradition of the Salaf in his world—opens the possibility for resistance against the dominant culture threatening Jihadi-Salafism and creates, especially in the argument of ISIS's political theorists, the possibility for a new inhabitable world

Jihadi-Salafi arguments calling for martyrdom-seeking operations are not mere legitimations of a tactic but instead articulate a rearrangement of the relationship of the faithful to God. In the estimation of the jurists and theologians defending their usage, martyrdom-seeking operations represent an answer to the question of suffering facing Muslim communities. They are an authentic performance modeled after the memory of the Salaf. Martyrs are exemplary expressions of the Jihadi-Salafi demand to uphold the unity of God and the memory of faithful communities that came before.

The Challenges of Definition: What Is Jihadi-Salafism?

Readers may be familiar with Usama bin Ladin and ISIS but less familiar with the idea of Jihadi-Salafism. Any researcher hoping to define Jihadi-Salafism faces a challenge. Much of this difficulty arises from the various theoretical and methodological approaches available for engaging Jihadi-Salafism as a phenomenon. I argued above that Jihadi-Salafism is an ascetical tradition possessing a theodicy that casts aside the dominant culture of Islamic jurisprudence, Muslim-majority societies, and the West in order to open the possibility for a new society. Other approaches argue that Jihadi-Salafism represents a radical and violent array of loosely allied sociopolitical movements best classified alongside other movements within typologies. Such typologies bracket off analysis of their religious discourse, instead

emphasizing the mobilizing aspects of Jihadi-Salafi rejectionist ideologies. Often analysts pursuing such typologies blend them with the resource mobilization and framing hypotheses of SMT, whose analysts argue that Jihadi-Salafism represents an amalgamation of various scholarly communities, dating to at least the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. These communities, alongside cadres of fighters, tacticians, and strategists, assembled into formal and informal institutions competing for tangible, material benefits (such as recruits and territory) or for intangible, but no less important, benefits such as the authority to pronounce final legal rulings on matters of belief and practice or issue decisions on political and military strategy. Finally, and perhaps most controversially, there are those researchers who argue that Jihadi-Salafism describes the theological and legal interpretations published in print and online by a global community of recognized Jihadi-Salafi authors, lay supporters, and scholars who seek to align the creed (*ʿaqīda*) and methodology (*minhāj*) of al-Qaʿida, ISIS, and their cobelligerents within an authenticated tradition of Islamic belief and practice.

Defining Salafism

As I have stated, the Salaf are memorialized by Jihadi-Salafis as the authentic foundation of their tradition. The term, however, possesses a complicated genealogy. This is due, in part, to its diffuse nature, which implies a part of the Arabic expression *al-salaf al-ṣāliḥīn*, or "pious predecessors," and refers to either an individual or communal commitment to the belief that the companions of the Prophet Muhammad (570–632), known collectively as the *sahaba*, and the two generations following them, known collectively as the *tabiʿun*, were an exemplary archetype for the embodiment and implementation of true Islam. These communities, Salafis believe, participated in the construction and creation of exemplary precedent for the realization of God's society on earth.

What complicates this description is the multitude of geographies within which discussions of Salafism take place. It originated in Arabia as a "reactionary soteriology," as Shiraz Maher puts it, and from that origin is found discussed in the works of Sunni polymath Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328) writing in Damascus, his student Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (1292–1350) also writing in Damascus, the reformation project of Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab (1703–1792) written in the Arabian Peninsula, the legal reformist

project of Shah Wali Allah (1703–1762) in Delhi, the Egyptian modernist reform projects of Muhammad ʿAbduh (d. 1905), Rashid Rida (d. 1935), and the studies of prophetic narrations by Nasir al-Din al-Albani (1914–1999) conducted in Syria, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.[35] For many of these theologians, legists, and reformers, the contemporary Jihadi-Salafi projects of theology, law, and salvation would be unrecognizable appropriations of their understandings of Salafism. Yet their discussions of the Salaf opened the possibility of an applied theology and a means by which those who would later self-identify as Jihadi-Salafi shaped personal and communal beliefs and practices meant to transform the world along the guidelines of God's revealed law.

This emphasis on world transformation led many recent discussions of Salafism to focus on the political implications of the movement. Bernard Haykel, however, argues that "Salafis are first and foremost religious and social reformers who are engaged in creating and reproducing particular forms of authority and identity, both personal and communal."[36] Joas Wagemakers, borrowing from other fields, describes it as a "grounded utopian movement" that focuses on "the 'ideal place' or 'utopia' of the first generations of Islam, while simultaneously being grounded in the very real places Salafis live in and the actual people they meet."[37] Henri Lauzière concludes that it is neither antimodern nor antirational but a response to decolonization.[38] Maher adds that Salafis expect to realize the perfect society in this world by affirming "progression through regression."[39] In her study of Salafi Muslim converts in the United Kingdom, Anabel Inge emphasizes that in her framing, Salafis are those who seek to craft an alternative to Western cultures through practices of "moral and doctrinal purification."[40] By maintaining authenticity and purity through regular boundary maintenance relative to other communities, Salafis hope to create a redemptive society that maximizes the possibility for living a pure Muslim life. Such purity will secure a more favorable judgment in the next life. The idea and pattern for this society is one imagined as coming from a community of scholars perceived to have taught their communities the same lessons and who realized success in the world as a result. Any contemporary Salafi community lays claim to a tradition—both lived and within texts—meant to teach the appropriate way of following the prophetic model.

Prior references to the community of the Salaf and arguments for the necessity of following their precedent often occur in response to social rupture and upheaval—what Berger might call circumstances of anomie. Perhaps the

most well known of those making reference to the necessity of upholding the precedent of the Salaf is Ibn Taymiyya, who lived and worked following the sack of Baghdad in 1258 by Mongol armies. Ibn Taymiyya considered the Salaf so essential to his conception of the Muslim community that he placed them alongside the Qurʾan and Sunna in his understanding of how best to determine Islamic orthodoxy.[41] Like others discussing the Salaf, Ibn Taymiyya defined orthodoxy as those communities that would be aligned with the "victorious group" (*al-ṭāʾifa al-manṣūra*) or "saved sect" (*al-firqa al-nājiyya*). Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab, writing in the Arabian Peninsula in opposition to what he deemed impious innovation (*bidʿa*) within Ottoman legal, spiritual, and mystical practices, cited the example and precedent of the Salaf as the required solution to the weaknesses such innovations brought to the Muslim community, the *umma*.[42] In the twentieth century, Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966)—writing against what he considered the "ignorance" (*jāhilyya*) of the West and governing Arab nationalist parties in Egypt and Syria—sought in the community of the Salaf an exemplary historical model of the possibility of realizing justice in society and a model for the moral obligations one must undertake to realize such justice amid the global injustices of two world wars and the creeping failure of Gamal Abdel Nasser's (1918–1970) Arab nationalism.[43] Although separated by centuries, for each of these reformers, the Salaf represent an inherited tradition that, when cited as a motivation for modes of action, allows the possibility for reformers to claim spiritual authority to identify the excesses of immoral behavior of their contemporary communities and issue corrective reforms.

Throughout the history of communities of faith and, in particular, Islamic theological and legal communities, periods of crisis have given rise to the possibility of canonization. Ahmed El Shamsy, for example, argues that in the formative period of Sunni Islamic law, the primary social trigger was "a crisis of identity and authority experienced by the Muslim community, the *umma*, that was caused by the enormous social, cultural, and political changes affecting the *umma* in the second/eighth century."[44] In that time, El Shamsy argues, such upheavals "prompted a search for new foundations of religious authority, a way of accessing the authentic message of divine revelation that was more secure than the avenue of communal practice, which seemed increasingly frail and ambiguous."[45] The formation and recognition of authorized texts—and the recognition of the authority possessed by those authoring them—contribute to the formation of another boundary by which Salafism might be understood.

I suggest, following Alexander Thurston's example, that contemporary Salafi communities are engaged in a process of canonization of their own. Thurston argues for a later start date for the phenomenon of Salafism, dividing its crystallization into two phases: 1880–1950 and the 1960s onward.[46] The first of these, from 1880 to 1950, involved heightened local encounters among hadith-oriented scholars, while the second of these, starting in the 1960s, saw the synthesis that occurred when the Saudi monarchy invited exiled Muslim Brotherhood members, among others, to the kingdom to serve as instructors and advisers in the monarchy's project of spreading pan-Islamism.[47] Once again, the sense of crisis and strain motivates the formation of the community. For the scholars from 1880 to 1950, the encounter with European modernities shaped their projects of reform. For Jihadi-Salafis, most of their conversations will engage with the post-1960 era, including Sayyid Qutb, Muhammad ʿAbd al-Salam Faraj (1954–1982), and ʿAbdullah ʿAzzam (1941–1989).

During this period of canonization, Thurston identifies three "streams" of literature essential to the canon. The first of these, emerging from the traditionist Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780–855), includes the works of later Hanbali thinkers such as Ibn Taymiyya, his student Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, and Ibn Kathir (1300–1373), who followed them both. Thurston includes in this group Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab. The second group, including Yemeni and Indian thinkers such as Muhammad al-Shawkani (1760–1839) and Shah Wali Allah (1703–1762), were those rejecting any following of the tradition (*taqlīd*) of the Sunni legal schools and arguing for correct Islamic belief and practice to be derived from the Qurʾan and Sunna. Finally, Thurston identifies an Islamic revivalist and modernist stream located primarily within Egypt that sought to address the challenges posed by European economic, political, and scientific dominance in the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa.[48]

Jihadi-Salafism as a Creed (*ʿAqīda*) and Methodology (*Minhāj*) in Response to Collapse

Another difficulty, however, is the question of Jihadism. Jihadism, as a concept, has no analogue in either classical Arabic or within early or medieval Islamic theories of jihad and fighting (*qitāl*). Many contemporary scholars of Islamic law consider Jihadis—or those who articulate the necessity of violence to Islamic belief and practice—to be guilty of either extremism

(*ghlūw, tatarruf*) or sowing unlawful discord (*baghy*) and terror (*irḥāb*)—all accusations that bring substantial penalty in classical Islamic law and legal theories.[49] The general program of Jihadism—particularly after September 11, 2001—has been the demand that physical combat and struggle are the sole means by which to fight the emergent challenges and corruptions presented by Western modernity. Through such self-renunciative fighting, Jihadis will argue, the global Muslim community—the *umma*—will be restored to its full agency and capability as the sole upright and moral guide for contemporary human social, political, and religious interactions.

Of the numerous criticisms leveled against Jihadi-Salafis, one often heard is the contention that they do not possess a concise and principled legal method and therefore lack the objective criteria, such as the possession of institutions of learning or schools (*madhāhib*) of legal thought, by which to sustain meaningful legal authority or support constructing political institutions. What such critiques often miss, however, is the primacy that Jihadis place upon creed (*ʿaqīda*) and the applied method (*minhāj*) by which that creed is embodied and practiced in daily life—either within or outside of struggle in God's cause. As I argue in chapter 1, their legal tradition emerges, in part, as a response to the perceived erosion of the institutions once securing Shariʿa within Muslim communities.

Tying Jihadism to Salafism is to bring together one concept, Salafism, which signals a project of reform or restoration founded on a claim to possess the authority of the earliest Muslim communities, with Jihadism. What is this idea of Jihadism? What are the theories by which it frames the world, and what are the actions and practices that it requires to bring those theories to fruition? Placing Jihadism ahead of Salafism and turning it into an adjective, I argue that Jihadi-Salafism is a claim made upon Salafism by those who emphasize the necessity of struggle, often violent, in God's cause. These Jihadi-Salafis argue for a unity of theory and practice that classifies the world and all within it into an orderly system of belief, an *ʿaqīda*, that ties the material world to divine revelation. Jihadism, as part of this Salafism, is part of the method, the *minhāj*, which Jihadi-Salafis follow to realize and implement their beliefs in this world.

In this book, the Jihadi-Salafi *ʿaqīda* and *minhāj* represent, together, how their principles of belief are tied to their methodical and intentional application within the world. In qurʾanic Arabic, the etymology of *ʿaqīda* is tied to the meaning of its trilateral root, *ʿ-q-d*, meaning to knot or bind together or

to necessitate an obligation.[50] The difficulty with discussing the Jihadi-Salafi creed is that much of it is not unique to Jihadi-Salafi movements. What is unique, as I argue in chapter 2, is that the interpretation of *tawḥīd* negotiated by Jihadi-Salafis is framed as an explanation for the relative success and failures of contemporary Muslim societies. The failures of communist, socialist, monarchic, or democratic governments are tied to their claiming various sovereignties—of the proletariat, the regnant, or the people—relative to God. Yet the assertion of God's divine unity (*tawḥīd*) is not simply a verbal affirmation but necessitates active and ongoing work within the world as prescribed by a specific set of interpretative, ethical, and legal guidelines—a *minhāj*.

Understanding the relationship between *ʿaqīda* and *minhāj* is essential to understanding how Jihadi-Salafism offers an applied theology meant to engage in an act of world transformation. An astute reader of Islamic law might raise an eyebrow here. What relationship does the Jihadi-Salafi conceptualization of *minhāj* have to do with the Shariʿa, to *fiqh*, or to the sources of both? The term *minhāj*, the cognate of which Wael Hallaq identifies as the Hebraic word *minhāg* ("the Law"), is found in the fifth chapter of the Qurʾan (*al-Māʾida*, "the Table"), understood by Muslim exegetes to be among the last chapters revealed to Muhammad after the conquest of Mecca in 630 CE:

> And we have sent down unto thee the Book in truth, confirming the Book that came before it. . . . So judge between them in accordance with what God has sent down, and follow not their caprices away from the Truth. . . . For each among you We have appointed a law [*shirʿa*] and a way [*minhāj*].[51]

For Jihadi-Salafi interpreters, this passage signals a connection between the necessity of unifying belief, doctrine, and practice. However, this connection tells us little about how Jihadi-Salafis consider their claims to lawmaking and theological interpretation to have any authority. The authority to proclaim authentic and inauthentic beliefs and practices begins with the actions of the proclaimer. One may not simply state that one "believes" in God's Messenger and Prophet. Jihadi-Salafis will demand the actions made manifest through the *minhāj* to demonstrate one's affirmed creed.

In some sense, then, I view Jihadi-Salafism as a synthesis of Salafism, possessing commitments to a purified moral creed debated across the canon suggested by Thurston and traced above, and an interpretative framework,

a *minhāj* as methodology, structuring the application of credal principles of that canon in daily life. I follow the argument of Maher, that there are five essential features of Jihadi-Salafi belief and practice: *tawḥīd, ḥākimiyya, al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ*, jihad, and *takfīr*.[52] To introduce these concepts, I will align them with the thought and work of those whose works are themselves often considered canonical for Jihadi-Salafi movements: Sayyid Qutb, ʿAbdullah ʿAzzam, Muhammad ʿAbd al-Salam Faraj, Abu Musʿab al-Suri (b. 1958), and finally, ʿAbd al-Qadir bin ʿAbd al-ʿAziz (b. 1950). Each of these authors considered his struggle (jihad) to require a renunciation of the corrupt material world (*dunyā*), a resistance against the tyranny of idols and corrupt political hegemonies (*ṭāghūt*), and a migration inwardly or outwardly to that which commands the good and forbids evil (*al-ʿamr bi-l-marʿūf wa nahy ʿan al-munkar*).

The first two of these, *tawḥīd* and *ḥākimiyya*, are often used by Jihadi-Salafi authors to explain the suffering and collapse of both the local and the global Muslim communities. *Tawḥīd* is often difficult to translate. Deriving from the Arabic root *w-ḥ-d*, the pattern of the word suggests a causative and transitive action. In this case, *tawḥīd* means to affirm or assert the oneness of God, to uphold God in all of God's essential essence and attributes. Qutb, who struggled against the Egyptian government of Gamal Abdel Nasser (in office 1954–1970), draws out the connection between the credal concept of *tawḥīd* and the necessity of its implementation:

> The Testimony [*shahadah*] that there is no god but God—which is the first pillar of faith in this religion—means one complete program [*manhaj*] for life, based on the absolute liberation of both inward emotion and action from all servanthood [*ʿubudiyyah*] to anything other than God.[53]

Justice in the world, a necessary condition for the possibility of liberation, depends on the implementation of *tawḥīd* within a complete methodology within the world. As Qutb would later write in his *Milestones* (*Maʿalim fi-l-tariq*), however, it would fall to a vanguard that understood the truth of the Muslim community, the *umma*, to struggle in God's path and realize this ultimate justice against the forces of modern ignorance (*jāhiliyya*) faced by Muslim communities.[54] Often used as a pejorative term to refer to the pre-Islamic prerevelatory period in the Arabian Peninsula, Qutb used *jāhiliyya* to describe the Soviet communist and Western democratic and capitalist

national powers of his day as "assaults against God's authority—His sovereignty [*ḥākimiyya*]—on earth."[55] Failing to uphold God's sovereignty, Qutb argued, explaining his theodicy, was to expose the faithful to the spread of oppression, humiliation, and the erosion of the social and moral fabric of society.[56] The importance of *tawḥīd* to Jihadi-Salafis cannot be underestimated. Both Bin Ladin and ISIS schoolteachers argued for the necessity of beginning any course of Jihadi-Salafi education with either the *Book of Tawhid* (*Kitab al-Tawhid*) or the *Ten Nullifiers of Islam* (*Nawaqis al-Islam al-ʿashara*) by Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab.[57]

The failure to be mindful of God's oneness is tied, in part, to the failure to uphold God's sovereignty (*ḥākimiyya*) over all worldly affairs. While Maher treats *ḥākimiyya* as a separate concept, I tend to elide it within questions of affirmations of God's oneness following the language of Qutb. Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab identifies three essential forms of *tawḥīd*: (1) the oneness of God's lordship (*tawḥīd al-rubūbiyya*), (2) the oneness of God's divinity and worship (*tawḥīd al-ilahiyya, ʿibāda*), and (3) the oneness of God's essence and attributes (*tawḥīd al-asmāʾ wa-l-ṣifāt*).[58] In his original project, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab was less concerned with rebellion against political authorities, however. Instead, as Ahmad Dallal argues, "his enemies were Muslims who held wrong beliefs about God. . . . His ideology was generally intolerant of many practices and beliefs of individual Muslims."[59] In the contemporary period, though, Jihadi-Salafis politicize this position.

With his *Neglected Duty* (*al-Farida al-Ghaʾiba*), Muhammad ʿAbd al-Salam Faraj, who was trained as an engineer, not a scholar, attempted to reinterpret Ibn Taymiyya for his fellow Egyptians. The project of Abdel Nasser and Egyptian president Anwar Sadat (1918–1981), he argued, had failed to uphold God's Shariʿa to his satisfaction and therefore was unjust. This claim influenced the assassins of Sadat (in office 1970–1981). Faraj argued that the laws of Egyptian society were man-made and therefore in violation of the divine laws sent by God.[60] The political oppression faced by Muslims, he wrote, was a direct result of their failure to uphold God's sovereignty. In such a condition, Faraj concluded, what becomes necessary is a defensive struggle (jihad) fought by all who are able against the tyrannical power.[61] There is one hurdle for Faraj, however: Muslims are not to fight or rebel against other Muslims. To solve this, Faraj narrowed those who may be considered Muslim, demanding that actions match stated beliefs. Faraj cited the example of Ibn Taymiyya, who, he argued, declared the Mongols who had taken control of Syria to be disbelievers, the taking of their lives licit—a declaration called

takfīr—on the basis of their failure to uphold the Shariʿa after confessing belief in God and God's Messenger.[62] The death of Sadat came amid the cries of Faraj's supporters about Sadat's manifest disbelief.

In part, as Thomas Hegghammer and Stéphane Lacroix argue, the continued politicization of *tawḥīd* and *ḥakimiyya* emerges as a result of the rise of pan-Islamism in the 1970s.[63] Following the execution of Qutb in 1966, the Egyptian government launched a massive crackdown on Muslim Brotherhood members. Many sought sanctuary in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which welcomed them in an attempt to create a bulwark against a possible rise of secular Arab nationalism.[64] The effects of this are still felt in the region in the form of "rentier Islamism," as it is described by Courtney Freer, and in the Sahwa reformist movement in Saudi Arabia as studied by Lacroix.[65] Another outcome of the increased Brotherhood presence in the monarchy was the forging of new social networks. One of these was essential to the career of ʿAbdullah ʿAzzam, a Palestinian Muslim Brother who, after once having taught in Saudi Arabia, departed to join the struggle against the Soviet Union, which had invaded Afghanistan in 1989.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is likely second only to the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq and, perhaps, Abu Bakr al-Baghadi's caliphal project, to the development of contemporary Jihadi-Salafism. If, as Maher writes, the 2003 invasion of Iraq "was instrumental in giving shape and definition to what is recognized as Salafi-Jihadism today," the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was, as Hegghammer describes it, the "cradle of the jihadist movement."[66] Central to the mobilization of Arab Muslims to Afghanistan was ʿAzzam, who argued that all Muslims—no matter where they were in the world—had an obligation to travel to Afghanistan to fight against the disbelieving Soviet armies in defense of their Afghan Muslim allies.[67] In the course of fighting, ʿAzzam wrestled with the question of those to whom one must have loyalty (*al-walāʾ*) and those whom one must depart from and disavow (*barāʾ*). When asked, for example, if Americans or Western states should be asked for assistance, ʿAzzam—relying on narrations taken from the collections of Ahmad ibn Hanbal—argued that this was forbidden.[68]

While ʿAzzam was fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan, he joined with a young Saudi, Bin Ladin, with whom he established the "Services Bureau" (*Maktabat al-khidmāt*), a forerunner to al-Qaʿida. Bin Ladin was enamored with the jihad against the Soviets. Although often discussed for his

self-justified pronouncements calling for attacks against U.S., Saudi, and Israeli interests, what some observers often overlooked in Bin Ladin's biography was, as Flagg Miller writes, that "as a former jihadi financier who had abandoned the 'wealth and palaces of the world,' he obviously struck a chord with a generation of Saudis and other Arabs who were fed up with unprecedent levels of state affluence and corruption."[69] Through pious renunciation, Miller observes, Bin Ladin helped foster a narrative that "a militant rendition of asceticism . . . expresses certain solutions to political and moral conflict in the Arab world, especially in the Arab Gulf states including Saudi Arabia and Yemen, and [came] to distinguish al-Qaʿida's vision from that of other Muslim militant groups."[70]

Since the events of September 11, 2001, Jihadi-Salafi movements, whose social networks were forged during the fighting in Afghanistan against the Soviets and in the post-Soviet civil wars, experienced what may be the largest period of growth in their history.[71] The invasions by the United States and its allies of Iraq and Afghanistan mobilized both local populations and global foreign fighters to resist what Bin Ladin often labeled "Zionist forces and their Crusader allies"—both of which fulfill the role of a "dominant culture," in Valantasis's estimation.[72] Though he was critical of the September 11, 2001, attacks, Abu Musʿab al-Suri (born Mustafa Setmariam Nasar) wrote in his 1,600-page *The Summons to Global Islamic Resistance* (*Daʿwa al-muqawama al-islamiyya al-ʿalamiyya*) that the post-9/11 era was an opportunity to pivot Jihadi-Salafi movements to a decentralized global guerrilla war in an attempt to overcome the failures of prior movements.[73] This work rivaled that of Sayyid Imam al-Sharif (also known as Dr. Fadl or ʿAbd al-Qadir bin ʿAbd al-ʿAziz), an early ally of Ayman al-Zawahiri, whose *Mainstay for the Essentials for Preparing for Jihad in the Path of God* (*Al-ʿUmda fi Iʿdad al-ʿUdda li-l-Jihad fi Sabil Allah*), published in 1988, was used as a training manual in al-Qaʿida camps in Afghanistan and emphasized both tactical and spiritual considerations needed for a successful struggle in God's cause.[74]

Jihadi-Salafi communities proliferated in the 1990s and 2000s across chat rooms, forums, and social-media platforms.[75] They discussed the mundane—the best shoes for fighting, their dreams, and their fears. They also debated, at times intensely, the nature of disbelief and the appropriate responses to it. Among those debates is the focus of chapters 3 and 4: martyrdom-seeking operations (*ʿamaliyyāt al-istishhādiyya*) in the cause of God. Most of the texts under consideration in this study, with the exception of those relating to ISIS,

appeared before the rise of ISIS and were published online on the Minbar al-Tawhid wa-l-Jihad ("Rostrum for Monotheism and Jihad," as its authors translate it), a focus of chapter 1. This website, administered by loyal followers of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, a Jihadi-Salafi jurist and theologian, features texts by many of the figures listed above debating all aspects of the *ʿaqīda* and *minhāj* needed to protect global Muslim communities from disbelief.

Typologies and Methodologies: Studying Jihadi-Salafism

Any cursory review of these Jihadi-Salafi source materials reveals the diversity of thought and opinion that resists neat classification into singular historical narratives. While ISIS and al-Qaʿida are both Jihadi-Salafi movements, the very public rupture that occurred between Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and Ayman al-Zawahiri based on the nature of the former's caliphal aspirations revealed that while Jihadi-Salafis may agree on matters of creed, they might yet have substantial disagreements on matters of methodology.[76] The various methods researchers use to understand these matters of creed and methodology often emphasize the potential of classifying the activism and political priorities of Jihadi-Salafi movements in order to evaluate their political activity.

Those approaching this book with backgrounds in political science, comparative politics, or history might be familiar with typological approaches to Jihadi-Salafi studies. Quintan Wiktorowicz created one of the earliest, and most enduring, typologies of Salafi thought and practice when he classified Salafis into four groups: "purists," "deviants," "politicos"—and "jihadis," the last characterized by their demand for violence, if not revolution, to respond to the demands of their sociopolitical context.[77] Following a few attempts to amend the typology—Mohammed Hafez, for example, proposed replacing "purist" with "apolitical" or "conservative"—several studies directly challenged such divisions.[78] For Jihadis, the phenomenon was similar—even they debated the nature of their doctrinal purity, their role to play in local politics, and whether rival movements were beyond the boundaries of their *ʿaqīda*. As Wagemakers argued, even amid their active attempts to reform society from below—or in the case of Jihadis, from without—the categories of "quietist," "politico," and "jihadi" often appeared to collapse into one another, particularly in the work of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi.[79]

As a result of the fluidity of the categories of "quietist/purist," "politico," and "jihadi," some researchers proposed alternative approaches. Hegghammer, arguing in 2010 that Salafism is a "theological, not a political category," claims that as an analytical concept, it "says very little about the political preferences of the actors described as Salafis."[80] Salafism, therefore, is secondary to any political behavior and must therefore not be the basis of a typology.[81] In order to evaluate the campaign by al-Qaʿida in Saudi Arabia in the 1990s and early 2000s, Hegghammer proposed a "preference-" or "rationale-based" typology of Islamist activism within which he argued that al-Qaʿida is a pan-Islamist group, seeking the unity of the global Muslim community (the *umma*), that emphasizes the necessity of violent means (taking one of two forms, either classical or global Jihadism) to defend itself.[82] By setting aside theological language and instead pursuing tangible material and political objectives, Hegghammer argues, it becomes possible to monitor patterns of behavior and militant strategies as responses to social, economic, and political catalysts within a comparative perspective.

In concluding his typology, Hegghammer declares that al-Qaʿida is a global Jihadist group with an emphasis on violent pan-Islamism. Global Jihadists, in this typology, argue that Muslims have suffered a long series of humiliations at the hands of non-Muslims and therefore call for struggle against the United States and other Western powers in all locales and with all means in order to "fight to defend the entire Muslim nation [*umma*] and its territories from non-Muslim aggression."[83] Maher, accepting Hegghammer's idea of a typology, offers that Jihadi-Salafis are violent rejectionists who "are irreconcilably estranged from the state, regarding it as a heretical and artificial unit."[84] At the core of their creed and methodology rests a demand to fight to destroy the nation-state—or at least eliminate such systems in Muslim-majority contexts—because any human-made temporal legislation denies God's sovereignty over human affairs.[85]

The idea of narrative as a resource for political mobilization and contention characterizes the contributions of SMT, the second of the methodologies used to classify Jihadi-Salafi movements. Within SMT approaches, religious, theological, and legal discourses are one of several instruments mobilized by actors to identify like-minded allies, contend against opponents, and locate other forms of resources (e.g., finances, social capital, etc.) required to thrive amid fluctuating social and political circumstances.[86] Theological terms and doctrinal disputes, while not altogether left out of studies of the Jihadi-Salafi movement, are often considered aspects of Jihadi-Salafi discursive framing

and therefore without any primary utility to classificatory and predictive SMT models.

From the typological and SMT approaches, however, emerges one of the primary questions facing any researcher: what to do about the theology and legal discourse of these movements and authors. As Wagemakers acknowledges in his more recent work on Salafism in Jordan, "scholars using SMT for the analysis of Islamists often deal with ideology and ideas as mere instruments or resources to mobilize people, rather than sources of inspiration that are important in and of themselves."[87] Framing a turn toward the discourse of Salafis in Jordan as the product of the truly faithful, Wagemakers offers that it is important to view "their ideology as important simply because they see it as the truth."[88] This book, in conversation with the typological and SMT methods, does not seek to replace or overturn them. Instead, this book is a contribution to what they often set aside—what emerges for study when scholars take seriously the truth claims of Jihadi-Salafi scholars and adherents.

Are Jihadi-Salafis Muslim? Is ISIS Islamic? A Problem and an Approach

Often attempts to take these truth claims seriously have created trouble for researchers and journalists. Among the challenges of the study of religion is the willingness of researchers to take seriously the claims of truth and authority made by all those proclaiming faith (or none). For some readers, this will suggest that I am placing al-Qaʿida and ISIS in a sympathetic perspective. In fact, some may outright condemn this study as claiming that ISIS and al-Qaʿida—if not all Jihadi-Salafis—are Muslim. Such caution is understandable. Writing in the pages of the *Atlantic* in March 2015, Graeme Wood offered readers a lengthy analysis of the origins, objectives, beliefs, and practices of Abu Bakr al-Baghadi's ISIS. Wood argued that ISIS spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani (born Taha Subhi Falaha, 1977–2016) did not "talk trash" but instead composed speeches "laced with theological and legal discussion." This, Wood concluded, was further proof that ISIS was Islamic—"*very* Islamic."[89] Of course, Wood admitted, this did not mean that communities of Muslims across the globe accepted ISIS violence—in fact, he recognized that the majority of the world's Muslims continue to reject the claims of the ISIS altogether.

The response to Wood's claims of authenticity were swift. Wood's argument that modern Muslims somehow neglect or conceal aspects of their faith tradition resulted in numerous critiques. Scholars, journalists, and practitioners protested what they considered Wood's overgeneralization. Some sought to represent the voices of Muslim communities who had long suffered under Western foreign policies.[90] Others criticized Wood's representation of ISIS having a "literalist" interpretation of the Qurʾan, arguing instead that their "so-called 'prophetic methodology' is nothing more than cherry-picking what they like and ignoring what they do not."[91] Rather than being "really Islamic," several commentators argued, ISIS was more modern than not, an amalgamation of Western political ideologies combined with cursory reading of sacred texts.[92] At the core of the responses rested an essential argument: Haykel and Wood framed Islam as inherently belligerent, an argument that would certainly threaten the safety of innocent Muslim communities across the globe.

I follow the argument of J. Z. Smith, a scholar of the history of religions, who says that the study of religion is an exercise created in part by the scholar to undertake an act of translation in how others engage in of the creation of meaning within the world.[93] I am not pursuing the question of *whether* Jihadi-Salafis are Muslim, a theological decision on their orthodoxy or orthopraxy. I am engaged in how they construct their understanding of Islam as a narrative framing the world they inhabit. This project should not be read as making a decisive conclusion on the "nature of Islam" relative to Jihadi-Salafism, because this project approaches Islam following the example of Talal Asad's project of an "anthropology of Islam" that sets forth from the idea that if taken as a discursive tradition, Islam is "a tradition of Muslim discourse that addresses itself to concepts of the Islamic past and future, with reference to a particular Islamic practice in the present."[94] Islam then might be understood as a tradition of traditions, a plurality of sites of constant negotiation wherein those affirming their identities as Muslims struggle with histories and traditions that they consider Islamic.

Thus, the question of whether Islam may be a religion of either peace or war is a false point of departure. The nature of war and peace and the relationship of interpretations of the law legitimating the declaration and cessation of hostilities remain sites of negotiation. Consider the example of Sherman Jackson. Writing shortly after the events of September 11, 2001,

Jackson affirmed the peaceful history of Muslim communities but critiqued contemporary unreflective assertions of the same. For Jackson, the discourses of "Muslim radicals," whom Jackson describes in a fashion similar to Jihadi-Salafis,

> cannot be simply ignored out of fear of bringing Islam under indictment. Nor can they be dismissed as the mindless rantings of a tiny, vociferous fringe or the politically motivated dribble of simpletons who just don't understand the glorious tradition of classical Islam. For, rightly or wrongly, these views constitute the going opinion in many quarters. And the authors of these views are often men of immense standing who wield enormous authority in the Muslim world and beyond. If the American government-media complex or American Muslim apologists can condemn or dismiss these views as extreme or unfounded, it should surely be no more difficult for the latter to dismiss their detractors as un- or insufficiently Islamic. Clearly, a more productive approach would be to search for ways of drawing Muslim Radicals into a logic that is both shared and esteemed by them and capable of serving as a basis for moving them beyond the blind and reckless radicalism that often characterizes their views.[95]

Where Jackson and I differ is on the matter of engaging with the radicals for the purposes of their reformation. This inquiry is not meant as an attempt to convert, cure, fix, or destroy the thought of Jihadi-Salafis, nor is it an attempt to normalize the nature of their asserted belief in Islam with the beliefs and practices of the global Muslim community at large. To take on a project of the magnitude that Jackson suggests would require not only a lifetime of study devoted to a mastery of Islamic legal traditions and theological texts drawn upon by Jihadi-Salafi authors but also the careful cultivation of considerable academic and spiritual authority that would have cultural resonance with Jihadi-Salafis—both of which are largely inaccessible to Western scholars of Islam.

In his inquiries on the question "What is Islam?" Shahab Ahmed, writing from a position similar to Jackson's, offers a brief but illuminating avenue to approaching violence deemed Islamic. Ahmed recognizes that the question of violence and the mustering of scriptural, theological, and legal traditions of Muslims to support or defend such violence are contentious at best. What one Muslim may consider a valid interpretation and application of a legal maxim from the Qurʾan might be considered by another to be a

perversion of an essential tenet of Islamic belief and practice. To consider violence Islamic, Ahmed writes, is not to state that Islam causes violence, but "rather it is that the violence is made meaningful by the actor in terms of Islam—just as the prodigious violence undertaken by soldiers of democratic nation-states is made *meaningful* for them and by them in terms of the nation-state, and may, therefore, meaningfully be called 'democratic violence' or 'national violence.'"[96] Ahmed's argument, however, remains incomplete.

In her criticism of Ahmed and her considerations of Asad, Zareena Grewal provides us with passage into an approach toward Jihadi-Salafi legal and theological discussions present here. Ahmed's formulation of "Islam/Islamic," Grewal argues, "is haunted by the question of power; what is the relative power of one claim to orthodoxy, made perhaps in legal-moral terms, relative to another claim to orthodoxy, made in aesthetic terms." Grewal explores power and meaning-making in the context of American Muslim communities, but, like her, I also explore the question of the construction of authority and its effect on legal interpretation. This debate over meaning-making is at the heart of the controversy that Wood uncovered in the pages of the *Atlantic*. If Jackson's and Ahmed's calls to understand this negotiation point us to a resolution of the Wood controversy, then they are not calls that will come to a clean resolution. As Grewal argues, "the challenge for those who study religious communities is to remain alert to the *tension* between tradition claims and abridgements of tradition, without privileging one category over another."[97] While Jihadi-Salafi authors may agree, for example, on the need to struggle in God's cause, the legal disputes regarding that struggle—the permissibility of martyrdom-seeking as a tactic, whether a state is achievable with uses of force upon a population rather than with its consent—remain open and ongoing questions.

Among the central condemnations leveled against Jihadi-Salafi jurists is their profligate use of *takfīr* to identify friend and foe of the faith. To argue whether the taking of a particular life is licit or illicit based on texts believed to have received a divine imprint is to bring one's declared belief in the purity of the justice, mercy, and judgment of the divine within the possibility of fallible human interpretation. Any human declaration of having perceived the divine will makes a claim upon existence and its meaning. Certainly, this meaning may answer larger questions for the faithful—for example, "Why do we exist?" "What is the purpose of this existence?"—but such meaning-making may also order the world into belief and disbelief with

an understanding that such division is divinely ordained and essential to a well-ordered world.

In chapter 1, I follow the approaches of Grewal, Ahmed, and Jackson to the question of how Jihadi-Salafis construct legal authorities and how those legal authorities produce narratives of idealized belief and practice. Certainly, there is no question that the overwhelming majority of the world's Muslim communities reject Jihadi-Salafi political and militant projects. Often those communities are the principal victims of the horrific violence undertaken by Jihadi-Salafis. Yet Jihadi-Salafis do devote considerable effort to thinking, writing, creating, and publishing substantial texts, audio files, and videos in an attempt not just to justify their actions to a global audience but to expand their reach and their recruiting footprint. They do this often knowing that their materials will land them in prison facing torture or will find them targeted by governments near and far, marked for death. Yet as the narrators and Bin Ladin tell us, such suffering is welcomed. Jihadi-Salafis work with vocabularies familiar and unfamiliar to Muslim and non-Muslim alike to create narratives that motivate and mobilize a community of faithful adherents to pursue an authentic submission to God.

Studying Martyrdom-Seeking and Jihadi Culture

Amid these renegotiations of authority and tradition, Jihadi-Salafi authors produce legal arguments, art, photos, videos, and audio files. As a result, there is a question about whether the sum total of these Jihadi-Salafi products constitute a culture. For some, one glance at a hagiographical martyrdom video is enough to affirm a Jihadi-Salafi "culture of death." As Hegghammer and his coauthors note, however, Jihadi-Salafis produce much more than gore-filled warnings of violence to come. In their framing, Jihadi culture constitutes the "products and practices that do something other than fill the basic military needs of jihadi groups." Some needs, Hegghammer writes, are those that are "basic" to the movement. These include "the capacity to deploy violence and the ability to muster material resources for its continued survival." In order to deploy violence, movements will need to "train, fight, raise funds, purchase weapons, write communiques, get some sleep, repeat the next day."[98] Such needs feel evolutionary: survival first, then comes time for the deliberation on higher philosophical questions. Culture, then, is an existential luxury

and is anything that does not support this primary and basic function of a rebellion.

Hegghammer and his coauthors admit that the idea of Jihadi culture is a new field for analysis and therefore in need of critique and refinement. My contribution to this conversation is to challenge the idea of cultural products as unnecessary, superfluous, or secondary to the Jihadi-Salafi capability to deploy violence or muster resources. I offer this in the spirit of Clifford Geertz: culture provides an interpretative frame on the world, inspired by inherited conceptions, that orders the world and influences knowledge and attitudes.[99] Yet culture itself must be performed. As Grewal writes, following Asad's critique of Geertz, one must study "arguments, logics, and styles of reasoning and interpretation of Muslim subjects who *think*."[100]

Oddly, Hegghammer and his coauthors leave undeveloped how Jihadi-Salafis themselves understand culture. Consider the following discussion of "Western culture" (*al-thaqāfa al-gharbiyya*) taken from the writings of Abu Mundhir al-Shinqiti, a Mauritian jurist and member of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi's Shariʿa Council:

> Western culture, in general, is a culture based on atheistic concepts and theories—all of which are contrary to religion [*dīn*] in general and to the Islamic religion [*al-dīn al-islāmī*] in particular. What is its general nature? It departs from that which is perceptible to the senses and from the consecration of the mind. It elevates the superiority of a materialistic view of the universe that contradicts the facts revealed in sacred scriptures. It focuses on a utilitarianism confined to mere pleasures. It rejects laws and the information learned from previous experiences—especially religious experiences—and replaces a religious spirit with a scientific spirit. It considers only the senses and experience as the sole source of any certainty in the world.[101]

In Arabic, the word *thaqāfa* ("culture") comes from the trilateral Arabic root *th-q-f*, which carries a general etymological meaning of acquiring knowledge or skill in a fashion recognized as both masterful and fluent. This is not far from the idea of the early Latin (*cultūra*) and French (*culture*) etymologies informing the contemporary English definition that Hegghammer discusses. Note, however, that for al-Shinqiti, culture implies a comprehensive mode of not just appropriate training but a form of epistemology. Culture, in this usage, is not simply a question of understanding moral good and evil and choosing appropriately, but it is also a way by which one orients

oneself to the world. One comes to know truth and falsehood—in addition to one's morality—through one's culture, in this framing by al-Shinqiti. Western culture is a failure not only because it focuses on a hedonistic materialism—against which, I argue in chapter 4, Jihadi-Salafis fashion their world-renouncing ascetical tendencies—but also because it fundamentally orients one to the idea of absolute truth incorrectly. The result is that culture can be a source for evil and suffering in the world as much as it can be a source for true knowledge and sound behavior. Only through religion—and, for Jihadi-Salafis, Islam as practiced by Muhammad in their estimation—can one avoid the catastrophic consequences of a disordered culture.

Jihadi-Salafi fighters and their supporters do not understand or accept their cultural productions as secondary. Instead, they are an essential means for critiquing the predominant threats of moral corruption and political paralysis that they face. Michael W. S. Ryan, in his *Decoding Al-Qaeda's Strategy*, argues that following their reading of notable guerrilla fighters such as Che Guevara and Võ Nguyên Giáp, Jihadi-Salafi strategists understand that "cultural conflict is deeply bound to the conflict in political, social, and economic fields, for it is a struggle between the system of values prevailing in society and the new system the revolutionaries bring with them."[102] Culture is as essential to the Jihadi-Salafi project as military training. In his *Guerrilla Warfare*, Guevara argued, "the peasant must always be helped technically, economically, morally, and culturally." The guerrilla fighter, for Guevara, was the embodiment of the ideals of the revolution and was, he argued, fundamentally an "ascetic"—a renunciative—one who denied the dominant cultures of society and opened the possibility of an alternative mode of existence using the simple materials available.[103] If Jihadi-Salafis possess a culture, I argue, this culture will emphasize this ascetical mode of being as creating the possibility of opening a new and alternative approach to constructing society and, in the case of ISIS, of constructing an entirely new state for the faithful.

Conclusion

In an interview with CNN's Peter Arnett near Jalalabad, Afghanistan, in 1997, Bin Ladin observed: "Being killed for God's cause is a great honor achieved by only those who are the elite of the nation [*umma*]. We love this kind of death for God's cause as much as you love to live."[104] Those who fight in God's cause, he argued, were those who understood a self-renunciative

truth at the heart of the message given by God to God's Messenger: struggle in God's cause is part of a grand divine transaction meant to command the attention and bring about the defeat of tyrannical authorities in this world. Renouncing one's self-concern and going forth to fight, he argued, was part of a long tradition of Muslims who sought to fight against the dominant powers of their day in order to create the possibility of an authentic mode of being. Failing to understand this, Bin Ladin told Arnett, meant that it would be "difficult to explain to you how we think of ourselves."[105] More than twenty years later, this book takes up the challenge of this "difficult explanation" by exploring what Jihadi-Salafis mean when they take to the battlefield, reciting that their struggle in God's cause—if not their very deaths—are patterned after the tradition of those who went before and that their brutal, violent acts will be what gives life to not just this generation of martyrs but also the next.

1

A Jihadi-Salafi Legal Tradition? Debating Authority and Martyrdom

> The war today between the Muslims and the Americans is not a battle over petrol, not a battle over water, not a battle for a land or a sea, not a battle for Palestine, or Iraq, or Afghanistan. Yes, these are all included in the reasons for the conflict, but the war—in its very essence and principle—is a war over *tawḥīd*." —Anwar al-ʿAwlaki[1]

The Emergence of a Jihadi-Salafi Legal Tradition

Historians argue that within three centuries of the death of Muhammad ibn ʿAbdullah (570–632), Muslim communities possessed a codified version of the Qurʾan, the customary precedent (Sunna) of Muhammad's sayings and actions, and volumes of legal debates and disputes about how best to use these sources of the law as authorities for political, economic, social, ethical, cultural, and religious guidance. Ahmed El Shamsy argues that this massive project, which spanned the geography of Europe, North Africa, the eastern Mediterranean, and Central Asia, occurred in response to continued social and cultural upheaval. Muslim communities, which once felt secure in the knowledge that they were following an unbroken model of the prophetic community in their daily lives, found themselves questioning the resemblance of their received normative traditions with the community of Muhammad. This led them to seek "new foundations of religious authority."[2] What emerged from this search, in El Shamsy's argument, were the legal sciences underpinning much of what became the Islamic legal theory and the schools (*madhāhib*) of Sunni Islamic communities.

Nearly a millennium later, the careful work of centuries of Islamic legal scholars and jurists who developed the institutions, educational curricula, and legal authorities needed to sustain that legal theory fell into question.

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Encounters with European colonial powers, the increasing speeds and diversifying methods of transportation and communication, and the economic reforms demanded by globalizing markets for capital disrupted patterns of cultural and moral life in Muslim societies.[3] In particular, print communication and, later, audio recording allowed for the rapid exchange of new ideas for reforming Islamic laws, legal theories, and theologies to answer what many considered the challenges posed by Western modernities.[4] Some of those responses argued for an increased role of Islam in the political lives of Muslim citizens in order to push back against what reformers argued was the displacement of public morality into the private sphere of citizens—precisely what Peter Berger, Brigitte Berger, and Hansfried Kellner described as a dilemma of processes of modernization.[5] Islamism, as this position was generally understood, is, Wael Hallaq argues, "not just about social justice and profound resentment of the political and military practices of the Western countries in the Islamic world: it is a moral movement that—however politicized—offers critiques of social injustice, political corruption, and Western political domination in moral terms (however lacking in philosophical articulation these have so far been)."[6] Morality, which for Islamists is best preserved within the traditions and institutions of the Shariʿa, becomes the "central domain," Hallaq argues, by which the problems of the world are to be solved and by which the sacrality of God's law will answer the destabilizing tendencies of privatization found within modernizing projects.[7]

Among the challenges leveled against Jihadi-Salafism as a broader religious ideology and against Jihadi-Salafi authors of legal and theological texts is that their claims to any religious or legal authority are unfounded. As the boundaries of the Islamic State expanded and it announced its plans to pursue political objectives through horrific brutality, Muslim scholars decried its acts as, in the words of Hamza Yusuf Hanson, those of "stupid young boys" and argued that not only had ISIS fighters gone against centuries of Islamic legal precedent, but their groups, in the words of Yasir Qadhi, "have harmed the image of Islam infinitely more than all of the foreign policy of Western lands combined."[8] Other scholars, such as Nelly Lahoud, once compared Jihadi-Salafis to the *khārijī*—the "seceders"—a community notorious among early Sunni Muslim historians for its brutality against the Umayyad caliphate and a term often used to proclaim one's opponent a political extremist.[9] For Lahoud, it will be the violence of Jihadi-Salafi movements that leads to their utter ruin. In both conversations, the Jihadi-Salafi pursuit of violence as an

instrument of political reform and as a fulfillment of religious obligation disqualifies their claims to possess any legal or theological authority.

In this chapter, I consider a different approach. Following the arguments of Shahab Ahmed and Sherman Jackson (see the introduction), I suggest turning aside from the violence of Jihadi-Salafi movements and fighters and turning toward the work of those whom Jihadi-Salafis consider authoritative authors, jurists, and theologians. In this chapter, I argue that the theological and legal texts, particularly the nonbinding genre of legal literature known as the fatwa, produced by those whom Jihadi-Salafis identify as legal authorities, allow us to consider how modern sociological and historical contexts have opened the possibility for Jihadi-Salafi jurists to negotiate interpretative authority. In particular, rather than viewing Jihadi-Salafis as a neo-medieval movement, this chapter establishes that Jihadi-Salafis are forming legal traditions—often around scholarly personalities—possessing digital institutions and recognized legal authorities to whom the faithful can turn.

To argue that Jihadi-Salafis possess an emerging legal tradition is different from suggesting that they possess a *madhhab*, or "school." In Sunni Islamic legal history, there were numerous *madhāhib*, but the four most well known and established were named for Abu Hanifa (ca. 699–767), Malik bin Anas (ca. 708/716–796), Muhammad bin Idris al-Shafiʿi (767–820), and Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780–855). In general, while Jihadi-Salafi authors will cite legal texts penned by jurists from each of these schools, Jihadi-Salafis resist affiliation with any particular school for fear of following restrictive adherence to tradition (*taqlīd*) or impious innovation (*bidʿa*). In arguing that Jihadi-Salafis possess a legal tradition, I'm following the idea of tradition as a search to recover moral resources in support of political, economic, and legal reforms to address the challenge of modernity—part of the negotiation of authority discussed by Zareena Grewal (see the introduction). This is a project that, as Hallaq argues, parallels the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor, and Charles Larmore, among others.[10] Only with such mobilization of tradition and authority are Jihadi-Salafis able to craft the theodicy and ascetical practice underlying their creed and methodology.

In his *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* Alasdair MacIntyre defines tradition as "an argument extended through time in which fundamental agreements are defined and redefined in terms of two kinds of conflict."[11] The first of these types of conflict resembles the response of contemporary Muslim scholars to Jihadi-Salafi legal interpretations. MacIntyre describes

those who reject any fundamental agreements on the tradition as external to it, sitting in the position of "critics and enemies."[12] Consider the example of ISIS. In the fourteenth (Rajab 1437/April 2016) issue of *Dabiq*, an English-language ISIS periodical that ran from 2014 to 2016, an unnamed author labels both Hanson and Qadhi as the "imams of disbelief [*kufr*] in the West," who have reinterpreted the concepts of "*tawḥīd, jihād, walāʾ*, and *barāʾ* to make them compatible with Western ideology."[13] These scholars and, the author claims, those who left their Muslim-majority homelands for Western comforts, have altered their identities and those of their children, with the result being an abandonment of the struggle (jihad) necessary to defend Islam.[14] In the Jihadi-Salafi theodicy, such abandonment contributes to the ongoing impotence of Muslim communities to respond to Western political oppression. The success of the Salaf against the tyrants of their day—the disbelieving Quraysh, the Byzantine and Sasanid empires—the author argues, was through understanding and upholding the correct creed. Much as the earliest community of Muslims—an "impoverished and malnourished few thousand herders"—became "the greatest most knowledgeable, and most pious generations of the Ummah," so, too, could modern Muslims, if only they would realize and return to the Jihadi-Salafi creed and the caliphal project of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.[15]

Jihadi-Salafis, however, also have internal debates on matters related to the application of their creed and methodology, on how best to uphold the unity of God in a polytheistic world, on maintaining the authenticity of their *minhāj*, and on the legality and best use of martyrdom-seeking operations. Within a tradition, MacIntyre argues that internal debates are "interpretative debates through which the meaning and rationale of the fundamental agreements come to be expressed and by whose progress a tradition is constituted."[16] As Hallaq has argued, however, the interpretative debates of a legal tradition often necessitate the formation of specific legal authorities—those with the religious, moral, and epistemic ability to shape and pronounce decisive rulings within a specific historical context. As I discuss at the end of this chapter, using a recent debate over the caliphal project of Baghdadi as an example, the creation of digital institutions and communities contributes directly to ongoing Jihadi-Salafi negotiations of authority. The rise of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, Hamud bin ʿUqlaʾ al-Shuʿaybi, and their students—and the media by which their legal discussions and rulings are transmitted—are included here as part of understanding the emergence of the Jihadi-Salafi legal tradition.

A Disruptive Modernity: Disciplinary Approaches to Framing a Moral Self within a Global Jihad

Jihadi-Salafi debates on the nature of their creed and its practical implementation are part of their efforts to address the suffering present in their societies. Any cultural alternative to the immoral Western political philosophies and economies present in their societies requires a return to jurisprudence and theology grounded within the morality of the Qurʾan and the prophetic precedent. Few projects have attempted to study the Jihadi-Salafi *ʿaqīda* and *minhāj*—the application of their theological method to the interpretation of texts and daily life—with this objective. The result is that studies often overlook how these public debates provide readers with model subjectivities for how best to live an authentic Muslim life in accordance with the Salaf. In other words, few studies pause to consider what Jihadi-Salafis consider the ideal mother, father, fighter, or martyr that, Jihadi-Salafis will argue, emerges from their legal interpretations meant to inform the correct pursuit of their creed. As Shadi Hamid writes, political scientists "have tended to see religion, ideology, and identity as 'epiphenomenal'—products of a given set of material factors."[17] This epiphenomenal approach to religion often involves framing Jihadi-Salafis and Islamists as belonging to social movements, something often considered within sociologies of religion as well.

Social movement theory (SMT) places an emphasis on religion as an instrument of social and political contestation. In his initial call in 1981 for an incorporation of the study of religions within SMT, Mayer Zald suggested that religions and social movements possess a shared origin. For Zald, "the progenitor of social movements in religious organizations may be social change in larger society, and, on the other hand, the outcome of change within religious organizations may be ideological and institutional changes in religious organizations and religion that impinge upon the larger society."[18] David Snow and Susan Marshall, writing in the wake of Zald's suggestions, argued that Islamic fundamentalism, as a social movement, exploited the blending of boundaries between "public" and "private" society occurring in the wake of a post-Enlightenment erosion of traditional values and cultures.[19] Islamic fundamentalism emerged from this degradation as a middle- and upper-class ideological preference favored by professionals for its ability to sustain social narratives supporting traditional values against what were viewed as encroaching Western social customs.

In the relatively short history of SMT and Islamic activist movements, researchers have advanced a multitude of theoretical approaches to explain and predict present and future manifestations of Islamic social and political development. Structuralist, functionalist, sociopsychological, postcolonial, and socioeconomic strain explanations have all been offered as useful lenses by which to interpret Islamic activist phenomena. One of the more recent applications of SMT to Islamic activist movements—and, more particularly, to Salafi movements, was offered by Quintan Wiktorowicz, who argued that resource mobilization theory (RMT), a subtheory of SMT, demands that "movements are not seen as irrational outbursts intended to alleviate psychological distress, but rather as organized contention structured through mechanisms of mobilization that provide strategic resources for sustained collective action."[20] This contention is verified by the multiple applications of RMT and other forms of SMT to Salafi and Jihadi-Salafi movements. Wiktorowicz, Thomas Hegghammer, Joas Wagemakers, and Roel Meijer, in their studies of Jordanian Salafism, al-Qaʿida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, and Yusuf al-ʿUyayri, respectively, all offer varying classificatory schemes of Jihadi-Salafis as politicos, quietists, irredentists, classical Jihadis, and other terms not drawn from within Jihadi-Salafi movements but instead assigned to them by the researchers for their varying utility to predictive models. Hegghammer, who draws on the political framing theories of Donatella Della Porta, contends that "by avoiding essentialist terms such as 'salafi' and 'takfiri,' and relying instead on categories reflecting immediate political preferences such as 'pietist' and 'socio-revolutionary,' [it is possible] to distinguish between previously conflated phenomena and provide more powerful causal explanations than those hitherto available."[21] Terms such as Salafi and *takfīrī*, these researchers suggest, and I believe correctly, are used by competing governments and movements alike to mobilize certain popular sentiments against one another. Such a move is captured, for instance, in the adage, "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." It is precisely this contestation however, that makes these terms useless for objective analysis and prediction in the estimation of Hegghammer. Terms external to the debate must instead be offered to create a productive and objective analysis.

In his studies of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, whom he labels convincingly a "Quietist Jihadi," Wagemakers emphasizes those aspects of SMT that demonstrate the negotiated dynamism that a discursive narrative shares with its social and political circumstances. Drawing on the "framing" theory of

Snow, Marshall, and Robert D. Benford, Wagemakers argues that frames "are prisms through which people view, explain and interpret themselves and the rest of the world and that colour influence and their perceptions."[22] Citing the work of Ann Swidler, Wagemakers suggests that frames are constituted along cultural lines, and the culture itself acts as a sort of toolkit of symbols, stories, rituals, and worldviews from which mobilizing agents within social movements may create persuasive narratives for action.[23] By this logic, a frame must resonate with its target audience if it is to be at all effectual. Frames are the practical logic upon which processes such as social alienation and radicalization are overlaid. To consider an individual who, on his or her own, downloads materials, engages in online communities, and then pledges loyalty to a Jihadi-Salafist movement before an attack is to recognize that the framing produced by broader Jihadi-Salafi communities was effective in their objectives.

The idea of a Jihadi-Salafi legal tradition builds alongside this idea of cultural framing. Recall that for Berger, the condition of the "homeless mind" emerged from the anomic conditions of modernity.[24] Theodicies, within these anomic conditions, are attempts to provide a meaningful ideological framework to relocate oneself within public and private spaces. Those who felt discontented with the dominant culture of their world, Berger argued, would withdraw from it in pursuit of the possibility of a more fulfilling society. For Jihadi-Salafis, this attempt at building a more fulfilling society is an ascetical process that requires one to renounce living according to the demands of a dominant culture and to dedicate oneself to performing the memory of the tradition of the Salaf. Though they may be separated in physical space, through their debates on the beliefs and practices of the Salaf—and how best to live those examples in their given contexts—Jihadi-Salafi jurists craft techniques of textual interpretation in order to interpret God's divine command and then publish these techniques and interpretations for other, like-minded Jihadi-Salafis to read, debate, and redeploy within their own communities.

In his discussion of the rise of Islamists, neofundamentalists (Salafis), and other contemporary Muslim communities, sociologist Olivier Roy suggests that these projects of withdrawal and communal recreation, within an Islamic context, emerged in the wake of the deculturation and deterritorialization of Islam.[25] In fact, he argues, Salafis prefer this deculturation and deterritorialization because the tie of belief and practice to a particular culture or country erodes the identification of the faithful with one another as part of

a global community, an *umma*, participating in an unbroken tradition of belief and practice stretching to the Prophet Muhammad.[26] The result of these processes however, included loss of local religious authority, a loss of social authority among scholars, a crisis in Islamic educational institutions, a crisis of cultural inheritance, and a transmission of authoritative knowledge.[27] It is up to the individual to believe and, adrift of cultural moorings, to reinterpret the demands of revelation—including the framework that explains for the faithful any asymmetry between their belief commitments and their material circumstances.

Western headlines often emphasize the relative lack of religious knowledge possessed by those who go off to join al-Qaʿida, ISIS, or their related movements. Some might call this the "ISIS for dummies" phenomenon after the discovery of ISIS documents indicating that it would evaluate and grade its members for their religious acumen.[28] For Roy, however, this makes logical sense. What is at work, he argues, behind those headlines is not "religion" but "religiosity"—"the way in which the believer experiences religion and appropriates elements of theology, practices, imaginaries, and rites to construct a transcendence for himself."[29] Where I depart from Roy's analysis is in his argument that those who join al-Qaʿida and, in particular, ISIS—who are often young and of varying socioeconomic and educational levels—do so with little care for the legal authorities arguing for the necessity of their joining and the permissibility of their undertaking attacks, even martyrdom operations. Muslim jurists following the Shiʿi traditions or the four authoritative Sunni schools—the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafiʿi, or Hanbali—are considered little more than subservient traitors to the dominant culture and are the parties responsible for the corruption of the Muslim community. What is needed, Jihadi-Salafi jurists argue, is a new tradition that renounces these old corruptions. To demonstrate this point, I turn to the attempted martyrdom-seeking operation of ʿUmar Farouk Abdulmutallab.

A Global Struggle for Unity: Abdulmutallab, an Airplane, and "Constants on the Path"

On December 25, 2009, twenty-three-year-old ʿUmar Farouk Abdulmutallab boarded Northwest Airlines flight 253 in Amsterdam, bound for Detroit, Michigan. At the beginning of his journey, while in Lagos, Nigeria,

Abdulmutallab concealed in his pants an explosive charge consisting of eighty grams of high explosive that remained undetected by Nigerian and Dutch airport security authorities. At the close of the eight-hour trip, as the flight crew prepared the cabin for the final descent into Detroit, Abdulmutallab stepped into an aircraft lavatory, took out a small syringe, and injected its contents—a chemical trigger—into the charge strapped to his leg. He then returned to his seat. Passengers soon heard loud crackling and smelled a foul odor throughout the cabin. Those seated closest to him noticed that his legs and the interior wall of the plane were on fire. Turning toward the commotion, Jasper Schuringa, a Dutch film director seated nearby, noticed the surging fire, leaped onto Abdulmutallab, and held him steady as flight attendants suppressed the flames with on-board fire extinguishers. When asked by those on the plane about what he had in his pants pocket, Abdulmutallab replied, "Explosive device." On the ground after being questioned, a matter not without some later legal controversy, Abdulmutallab claimed that he had been armed and directed by AQAP to carry out a martyrdom operation (*ʿamaliyya istishhādiyya*) in retaliation for the US-endorsed Yemeni military actions against al-Qaʿida.[30]

That AQAP planned the operation was corroborated by both the signature design of Abdulmutallab's explosive device and the various media statements and interviews released by Anwar al-ʿAwlaki (1971–2011) following the attempted attack. The explosive, PETN, or pentaerythritol tetranitrate, had been used by Richard Reid—the British citizen known as the "shoe bomber" for his attempt to detonate a device concealed in his shoes on an American Airlines flight in 2001—and also by ʿAbd Allah Hassan al-ʿAsiri in his attempted assassination of Saudi deputy minister of the interior Prince Muhammad bin Nayif on August 28, 2009.[31] As for al-ʿAwlaki, a US citizen who would later be killed in a drone strike in Yemen, he announced that Abdulmutallab and former US Army major Nidal Hassan, who had attacked a military base in Texas earlier in November of that year, were both students of his who answered the call to undertake heroic acts of a defensive jihad against the United States.[32]

Later, in the summer of 2011, in the English-language magazine *Inspire*, which he edited and published with his American counterpart Samir Khan, who was killed in the same drone strike, al-ʿAwlaki and AQAP lauded both Abdulmutallab and Hasan while explaining that their success was due to God and God alone:

> With the grace of Allāh alone the heroic martyrdom bomber brother ʿUmar al-Fārūq managed to carry out a special operation on an American Airplane. . . . He managed to penetrate all devices, modern advanced technology and security checkpoints in the international airports bravely without fear of death, relying on Allāh and defying the great myth of the American and international intelligence . . . making them regret all that they spent on security technology. Indeed, the unity of *ʿaqīdah* [creed] and brotherhood in Islām is what prompted the young man from Nigeria, the mujāhid brother ʿUmār al-Farūq, to respond directly to the American aggression. . . . We call on every soldier working in the crusader armies and puppet governments to repent to Allāh and follow the example of the heroic mujāhid brother Nidāl Hassan [sic]; to stand up and kill all crusaders by all means available to him. . . . Hence, we say to the American people: as you support your leaders and are standing behind them to kill our women and children, rejoice for what is coming to you! We will come to you with slaughter and have prepared men who love death as you love life.[33]

Abdulmutallab's success, al-ʿAwlaki suggests, emerged as his response to the creed (*ʿaqīda*) and community of the faith. This prompted Abdulmutallab's withdrawal from the world and his aggressive pursuit of American targets. At first glance, the dichotomies established by al-ʿAwlaki seem similar enough to the often-heard rhetoric of Usama bin Ladin (1957–2011) and Ayman al-Zawahiri (b. 1951): the crusading forces of the United States are aggressors against Islam, God grants Muslim combatants victory in the face of the insurmountable technological advantages of the West, and finally, as much as the West clings to its love of this material world, so, too, do those Muslims fighting against it prefer death and, presumably, the rewards such a death brings in the afterlife promised by God to those who affirm God's unity and the truth of God's message given through prior prophets and messengers.[34]

Beginning on the day of the attempted attack, US Federal Bureau of Investigation special agents interviewed Abdulmutallab about his recruitment, his relationship with al-ʿAwlaki, and how he understood the legitimacy of his acts. Although not without controversy, these interviews extended over the next six months and were eventually released in a redacted summary form after a Freedom of Information Act request.[35] In the course of the interviews, the agents recorded Abdulmutallab's understanding of

al-ʿAwlaki's scholarly authority and his ability to issue nonbinding legal rulings, or fatwas, on the subject of jihad:

> Religious rulings or fatwahs [*sic*] are a common concept in Islam. Fatwahs do not actually bind the receiver to doing the act described in the fatwah. Essentially a fatwah is a religious interpretation; so, in order to follow it, the receiver must have a measure of the trust in the individual issuing the fatwah. There is not one source for all fatwahs. If an individual has the authority to issue a fatwah, based on their scholarship in Islam, then they may weigh in on Islamic issues and topics and give their interpretation based on the Qurʾan and Hadith. In the end, the scholar needs to be convincing in order to influence people to follow his fatwah. Sometimes general fatwahs on a range of topics are issued and made available for people to consider. The readers are allowed to choose those they desire to follow, based on their trust in the individual issuing the fatwah.[36]

When asked whether al-ʿAwlaki had issued a fatwa for his martyrdom operation, Abdulmutallab responded that there was no need. He argued that the issue and question of martyrdom operations and struggle in God's cause had long been settled in prior fatwas.

For centuries, Muslim jurists have debated, disputed, and interpreted the sources of the law (*uṣūl al-fiqh*)—the Qurʾan, Sunna (precedent of the Prophet Muhammad), the consensus (*ijmāʾ*) of the jurists, and their own analogical reasoning (*qiyās*)—to explore all dimensions of the law. Although it is often popular to translate *Sharīʿa* as "Islamic law," this is an incomplete understanding. The Sharīʿa as an idea transcends the idea of law as the summation of customary or positive precedents. Sharīʿa is understood to be a divinely constituted totality meant to provide guidance and ethical objectives for human existence. A fatwa, as a nonbinding legal answer to a legal question, ties the faithful to the law and those who interpret it. In his understanding of this process, Abdulmutallab is not in strong disagreement with the understanding shared by many Muslim jurists. Interpretations of the Sharīʿa, a product of jurisprudential methods known collectively as *fiqh*, are considered fallible. In these acts of interpretation, though, ideals of the Sharīʿa are lent social, legal, and political force within various legal codes and methodologies by multiple agents—judges (qadis), jurisconsults (muftis), and, ultimately, individual believers. Of course, for Jihadi-Salafis, their legal reasoning will often reject the validity of other Muslim lines of reasoning—in

particular, on the evaluation of authentic Muslim belief and practice and the use of violence against innocent and guilty alike.

What Abdulmutallab did note, however, was that several of al-ʿAwlaki's lectures drew his interest and helped him nurture his understanding of the Jihadi-Salafi call to struggle in God's path. In his legal and theological interpretations, Abdulmutallab stated, "the truth resounds."[37] Foremost among Abdulmutallab's favorites—the one he called the most influential—was al-ʿAwlaki's "Constants on the Path of Jihad," which was delivered in 2005, sometime after he had left the United States when he became aware that he was under FBI investigation for providing material support to the 9/11 hijackers.[38]

Al-ʿAwlaki's lecture, however, was not entirely his own. Throughout his career, al-ʿAwlaki would often provide a lecture and commentary on a core text drawn from prior Muslim theological and legal authorities. The text of "Constants" was originally penned by Yusuf al-ʿUyayri (1974–2003) and was later posted to the Minbar al-Tawhid wa-l-Jihad ("Rostrum for Monotheism and Jihad") of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi.[39] Al-ʿUyayri, who was once the commander of AQAP, was prolific in Jihadi-Salafi history and had trained in Afghanistan, served as one of Bin Ladin's bodyguards, fought against the forces of the United Nations mission in Somalia, recruited volunteers for the struggle in Bosnia, and supported the fighting against the Russians in Chechnya.[40] In "Constants," al-ʿUyayri expressed his concern that modern Muslim scholars had argued for the need to set aside violent struggle in God's cause in favor of personal reform—the struggle against the self (*jihād al-nafs*). Arguing instead for the necessity of a jihad in the cause of God until the Day of Judgment at the end of history, al-ʿUyayri argued it was only through such endless fighting that Muslims would finally cease to suffer in the world.

In his editorial commentary on "Constants," al-ʿAwlaki reflected on al-ʿUyayri's argument for endless fighting by noting that there are moments when the Muslim community, the *umma*, will face defeat. Suffering from loss and injury in fighting, al-ʿAwlaki suggests, must not be blamed on a lack of preparation. Though this may be the case, he states, defeat happens for many reasons, among which are (1) God wants to test you, (2) God wants to purify you, or (3) you lost because of your sins, the foremost of which is forgetting the sovereignty and supremacy of God.[41] Such observations, though simplified, offer the reader and the listener a theodicy. Those who fight and struggle in God's cause, he argues, are those whom God will always sustain because they are of the "victorious sect" (*al-ṭāʾifa al-manṣūra*)

and therefore must approach defeats as tests to be withstood.[42] When asked by the agents whether he considered his attempted martyrdom operation a failure, Abdulmutallab responded that he did not, and when he explained why he was successful, he almost followed the passages of "Constants" to the letter. The agents wrote:

> Mutallab believed if one survives a mission due to mechanical failure, as in his situation, he has still fulfilled his mission for jihad. He *believes fate or destiny* determines the outcome of the mission and it is in God's hands. One takes an action and expects a particular outcome. When something else occurs, this is viewed as *a test of patience* from God. Mutallab believes *everybody is sinful* . . . [but] if *one shows patience he will be purified*. . . . [He concluded that] a failed martyrdom mission can be the result of *God wanting to purify an individual*. A specific sin may have prevented the success of his particular operation.[43]

In just a few sentences, Abdulmutallab provided what amounts to a theodicy—an explanation for why both good and bad outcomes had befallen him—and did so closely following the model of al-ʿAwlaki's and al-ʿUyayri's constants. Whether the agents realized it, Abdulmutallab affirmed his belief in God's divine providence (*qadar*, or "fate"), he explained that the faithful are those who are patient in defeat, who are purified by their patience, but that others fail due to the status of their sin.

In his analysis of al-ʿUyayri's and al-ʿAwlaki's texts, J. M. Berger argued that the call for endless jihad as a response to the suffering of the Muslim community was not a cause of "lone wolf" acts of violence, like that of Hasan, or of self-motivated radicalization, like that of Abdulmutallab, but their "principles logically empower such acts, especially [their] globalization of jihad (which is not dependent on a 'particular land') and [their] emphasis on taking any kind of action over taking pragmatic action calculated to achieve a strategic result."[44] Abdulmutallab's interview opens one possible approach to understanding the "principles" that logically empower self-motivated martyrdom seekers. However, the interview does much more.

Abdulmutallab, a Nigerian, sat in Michigan speaking to federal agents after having responded to and affirmed the theological and legal arguments of an American of Yemeni descent, al-ʿAwlaki, who, though then in Yemen supporting AQAP, provided commentary in the United Kingdom on a text

originally published by a Saudi national, al-ʿUyayri, who had once traveled to Afghanistan, Sudan, and Yemen. Further, al-ʿUyayri was the brother-in-law of another Jihadi-Salafi jurist, Sulayman al-ʿUlwan (b. 1969), who was a former student of one of the more prominent Jihadi-Salafi jurists of the 1990s and early 2000s, Hamud bin ʿUqlaʾ al-Shuʿaybi (d. 2001).[45] That text was published online to a website which at that time was hosted at a URL with an Internet country-code top-level domain for Samoa and was operated by students and supporters of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, a Jordanian-Palestinian jurist and theologian sympathetic to Bin Ladin's al-Qaʿida. What brought Abdulmutallab, al-ʿAwlaki, al-ʿUyayri, Bin Ladin, and the Minbar together were certainly modern networks of information and telecommunication—most notably, of course, the Internet—but also something else: a Jihadi-Salafi theodicy resting within an emerging Jihadi-Salafi method for legal and theological interpretation, a *minhāj* meant to restore order to a chaotic world.

Imagining a Jihad: Debating Charismatic Authority and Internet Mobilization

Jihadi-Salafi legal debates and interpretations occur amid a global community of scholars and are consumed by a global audience. During his interviews with investigators, Abdulmutallab made frequent reference to his use of the Internet to download and review the lectures of al-ʿAwlaki. In recent years, several different self-mobilizations (what some refer to as "self-radicalizations")—such as those of Omar Mateen (1986–2016), the Tsarnaev brothers (Tamerlan, 1986–2016, and Dzhokhar, b. 1993), and the husband-and-wife pair of Syed Rizwan Farook (1987–2015) and Tashfeen Malik (1986–2015)— involved downloading either al-ʿAwlaki's sermons or his writing in AQAP's digital magazine, *Inspire*.[46] In the case of the attacks in Paris on the staff of *Charlie Hebdo* in 2015, it is believed that al-ʿAwlaki provided more than juridical advice to the attackers but also provided financial assistance after the Kouachi brothers sought his advice and assistance.[47]

What is the nature of the authority that al-ʿAwlaki possessed? Roy speculates that among the many reasons al-ʿAwlaki may be popular with his audiences is his English-language delivery scattered with authentic Arabic citations and passages.[48] Such listeners do not care about the context of the

historical figures and legal debates cited by al-ʿAwlaki; they care about the performance of authenticity.

Yet we are not able to access the nature of their concern. Research suggests that the social, environmental, political, and psychological factors that leave some actors more susceptible to mobilization than others vary on an almost case-by-case basis.[49] For those reading the texts online, Anne Aly, using media studies theory, argues that such mobilization requires aspects of "meaning-making" by those consuming lectures and materials such as al-ʿAwlaki's.[50] Other approaches argue that al-ʿAwlaki acts as a form of charismatic authority—borrowing from Max Weber's category of legitimate domination (*herrschaft*) that vests authority within the personality of an individual recognized by others as special or extraordinary.[51] Authenticity, like authority, is negotiated subjectively,

Gary Bunt proposes that the digital presence of Jihadi-Salafis such as al-ʿAwlaki resembles both a viral marketing strategy—characterized by its ability to saturate various devices with free media and scalable information—and the ability to take advantage of unstructured, ungoverned, or anomic space. Bunt suggests that "it might be crude but appropriate to apply the metaphor of a computer network as representative of al-Qaeda: certainly, individual nodes can function independent of a central 'server,' communications can be rapid and secure and proliferate with ease; and certainly, the networking also offers logistical support and psychological senses of ownership through diverse methods and media."[52] The observations made by Akil N. Awan seem to parallel Bunt's contentions. Jihad discourses online, he writes, attract "a surprisingly diverse group of individuals across a range of markers including nationality, ethnicity, language, culture, age, social background, educational level, economic status, religious affiliation, religiosity, and criminality."[53] While recruitment and mobilization may finally occur at the level of familial, kinship, and patronage networks, both scholars would seem to agree that the Internet has become a driving force for the sustenance and spread of Jihadi-Salafi thought and practice at a global macro level.

Carefully parsing Abdulmutallab's words, however, shows that while he respected al-ʿAwlaki as a jurist, he retained a sense of self-identity and opinion. In particular, during the interview, he noted his disagreement with al-ʿAwlaki on the immediate requirement of a caliphate.[54] However, he did recognize that al-ʿAwlaki had a clear command of the Islamic legal

and theological tradition such that if necessary, al-ʿAwlaki could issue nonbinding legal rulings, or fatwas. Implicit within Abdulmutallab's understanding of his relationship with al-ʿAwlaki was his trust in al-ʿAwlaki's final pronouncements.

The role of the Internet and new forms of print and broadcast media driving the dissemination of Jihadi-Salafi materials reflects a broader relationship to new and emerging technologies. Much as Benedict Anderson traced the roles that the Reformation, the printing press, and market capitalism played in producing new "imagined communities" of nationalism in the territorial vernaculars of multiple European nations at the outset of the Enlightenment, new communications technologies were instrumental in the reimagination of the Muslim *umma*, or community, undertaken by Muslim reformers in the modern colonial and postcolonial eras.[55] This has been particularly the case with Jihadi-Salafi thought. Although the online Jihadi-Salafi community is often presented as a unified and monolithic front and a source of online radicalization, research indicates that recruitment still remains a product of personal relationships and familial networks, as opposed to Internet conversation.[56] However, the Internet and new media remain spaces for the creation and sustenance of multiple possibilities for Jihadi-Salafi interactivity and debate.

Yet the question must be posed: if the decentralization of Jihadi-Salafi legal traditions is analogous to the decentralized nature of the Internet, has the technology itself in some way shaped its formation? Bunt alludes to this when he analogizes al-Qaʿida to the nature and structure of the Internet. Citing al-ʿAwlaki and others, Madawi al-Rasheed suggests that "if there is a Salafi inspirational discourse, it must be seen as a hybrid construction deeply rooted in the last three decades of the twentieth century that is desperate to anchor itself in an authentic Islamic tradition, yet reflecting serious borrowing from the discourse of Western modernity."[57] Given the ISIS media apparatus, there is substantial evidence to this effect. In April 2016, ISIS supporters circulated a media manual titled "Media Operative, You Are a Mujahid, Too" (*Ayyuhā al-iʿlāmī anta mujāhid*), in which the reporting of an ISIS media agent is framed as a divine struggle to uphold God's divine unity against the forces of disbelief that Jihadi-Salafi authors are integrating technological allusions into their general strategy.[58] Al-ʿAwlaki, who favored what he called an "open-source jihad"—in which individuals locate, download, and manipulate the materials needed to customize their own attacks

as 'end users'—included on his list of *44 Ways to Support Jihad* a "WWW [World Wide Web] Jihad," part of which, he suggests, should involve the creation of discussion forums and secure accounts for the exchanging, posting, and production of new materials on jihad.[59] If Jihadi-Salafism, as a broader movement of which al-Qaʿida and ISIS are part, is less a movement and is instead a set of credal sensibilities applied to varying contexts—sometimes as a form of personal world renunciation and sometimes as a model for the formation of a state—then there may exist the potential for not only sociohistorical and political influences but also technological influences on the formation of the movement.

Jihadi-Salafi Legal Production: Fatwas among Genres

Abdulmutallab gives us some sense of how this negotiation might take place between Jihadi-Salafi authors and their local and online audiences. There is, in his framing of the relationship between the faithful and the jurist, a marketplace. "The readers are allowed to choose those they desire to follow," he writes, "based on their trust in the individual issuing the fatwah [*sic*]."[60] Further, he states that in his estimation, the sheer volume of fatwas that had been issued convinced him of the validity of martyrdom-seeking operations in the path of God. Rather than radicalizing him, Abdulmutallab suggests that fatwas helped him negotiate his own approach to an authentic Islam. Unfortunately, we do not know which fatwas Abdulmutallab read. However, his self-understanding of their role reveals, I argue, that a fatwa—today a result of both the juridical methodology producing it and the alterations by modern technological and social displacements to the relationship between the jurisconsult (mufti) and questioner (*mustaftī*)—is more than a mere device for establishing the legitimacy or illegitimacy of human actions. The historical and modern purpose of a fatwa is neither hortatory nor martyrological but rather legal and ethical. For Jihadi-Salafi authors in particular, a fatwa is an opportunity to provide advice for the maintenance and proper observance of the Jihadi-Salafi *minhāj*, or method, for living the creed in the world.

Abdulmutallab likely read Jihadi-Salafi literature from a variety of genres. As part of his al-Qaʿida training, he was shown videos and images of other martyrdom-seeking operations that praised the acts of those who died. In a similar fashion, al-Qaʿida and ISIS fighters—ranging from the September

11, 2001, hijackers to fighters heading into battle in Mosul in June 2014—recited qurʾanic verses, read Arabic poetry, recited *nashīd*s, and produced wide varieties of cultural products on the necessity of struggle in God's path. Underlying all of these productions and acts were public proclamations, rulings, and fatwas calling for the necessity of violence. In August 1996 and February 1998, Bin Ladin—assuming the role of spokesman for his coauthors—proclaimed the necessity of force against the United States, Israel, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.[61] Equally, the men fighting for ISIS on the fronts in Mosul sought and received fatwas justifying their struggle. In one recovered in 2015 from Raqqa, Syria, the mufti, who is unnamed, answers the question "What is the goal of jihad and why do we wage jihad?" with "The principle objective of jihad is to ensure people serve God alone [*huwwa taʿbīd al-nās Allāh wahduhu*] while distancing them from servitude to other servants and delivering them to servitude of the Lord of all servants."[62] In other words, a pursuit of God's divine unity (*tawḥīd*) necessitates a distancing of oneself from the worldly concerns of the masses. While there are multiple genres of production that support an individual pursuing martyrdom operations, the fatwa is the thread that weaves the Jihadi-Salafi legal tradition into a singular discourse rich with debate and disputation.

Given that a fatwa is nonbinding by definition, it may be objected that even if the fatwa did present to its readers an example of the ideal subjectivity of a martyr, this tells us little, if anything, about those reading the fatwas and acting upon them. This is true. It is almost analytically and objectively impossible to ascertain the motives of each individual who reads Jihadi-Salafi materials and then pursues martyrdom in an act of explosion, detonation, or immolation. To read a Jihadi-Salafi fatwa hoping to discern the "mind" of a martyr would be a futile and disingenuous task—especially given the near-global reach of digital Jihadi-Salafi materials. If, however, the fatwas are read as debates on practical training—a source portraying the ideal morality, comportment, and example of how best to believe—then it is possible to read them as sources for how Jihadi-Salafis debate and negotiate narratives of the authority to proclaim who is an ideal martyr, how an ideal state should be constructed, and how Islam is to be lived. All such negotiations work through the question of who may be considered an ideal witness (*shahīd*) attesting to truth of the Jihadi-Salafi *ʿaqīda* and *minhāj*. As Abdulmutallab noted, the pursuit of martyrdom

alone could be sufficient to purify the soul and be a proof of God's providence in human affairs.

A Genealogy of Fatwa Issuance: Toward Building Legal Authority through Change

To eventually locate and interpret the circumstances shaping the articulation of an ideal moral and legal subjectivity of martyrs by Jihadi-Salafi authors, it is first necessary to trace the landscape of possible jurists to whom Jihadi-Salafis will turn for their interpretations. As Abdulmutallab noted, the jurists in whom he placed his trust—those he recognized as authorities—were those who produced rulings that aligned with his emerging views of the ideal subjectivity required for martyrdom. He sought al-ʿAwlaki because he trusted al-ʿAwlaki to complete his disciplined self-renunciation. Before our close reading of the fatwas debating martyrdom operations, the subjects of chapters 3 and 4, I want to dwell on the authors of these texts and the medium by which these texts are circulated. A fatwa is the product of a dialectical relationship shared among a jurisconsult (mufti), a questioner (*mustaftī*), and the context within which the fatwa is issued. For many, the function of a mufti will seem alien and dissimilar to Western legal systems, because many contemporary Western legal systems lack any analogue to it.

Traditionally, the function of the mufti was to issue nonbinding rulings not only on those matters of law familiar to Western legal theory but also on those matters that are not included in Western legal systems—including "matters of religious conscience, ritual observance, ethics, family relations, and social manners."[63] When a new case (*farʿ*) emerges from conditions perhaps unforeseen within the legal literature at the time a question is submitted, a mufti will relate that case to an established legal ruling (*ḥukm*) drawn from an earlier source case (*aṣl*) or text. The mufti is obligated to identify within the original *ḥukm* the proofs establishing the principles or objectives of the Shariʿa that are necessary to incorporate the new question into the legal tradition. These proofs, demonstrated by textual evidence (*adilla*, sing. *dalīl*), are drawn from the four sources of jurisprudence established within Sunni thought: the Qurʾan, Sunna, *ijmāʾ* (consensus), and *qiyās* (analogical reasoning). The *farʿ* and the *aṣl* are connected by an effective or rational cause (*ʿilla*)—similar to the *ratio legis* of Roman law—that is established by the mufti through a process of analogical reasoning that is called, by some,

ijtihād. Although there is disagreement on the definitions and qualifications of these terms, the majority of scholars agree that these constitute the logical foundations for a fatwa.

While fatwas were once produced out of a cultivated personal relationship between the mufti and a community of questioners, by the medieval period, fatwas were considered a broadly applicable synthetic product of a dialectical relationship between a questioner (*mustaftī*) who lacks complete knowledge of the expectations of the law and a jurisconsult (mufti) from whom the questioner obtains clarity on matters ranging from contracts and personal injury to ritual observance. A fatwa produced by a mufti, though it may have a *ḥukm* (ruling), is different from a ruling produced by a judge (*qāḍī*). Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350), a student of Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), who is among those jurists often included in Jihadi-Salafi rulings, wrote in his *Iʿalām al-muwaqqaʿīn ʿan rabb al-ʿālamīn*:

> The mufti is separate from the qadi . . . [because] his fatwa is a general law [*sharīʿa ʿāmma*] which is conditional upon the questioner [*mustaftī*] and those other than him. As for the ruler [*ḥākim*), his ruling is both a specific and particular judgment that does not extend beyond that which is governed. The mufti produces a general and comprehensive ruling: "One who does this, must as a consequence do that. And, whoever says this, must then say that." The judge [qadi] produces a specific judgment for a specific person. His judgment is specific and binding. The fatwa of the scholar is general and nonbinding.[64]

When discussing this passage, Frank Vogel adds that "the mufti deals only with *abstract fact*, as stated to him by the requestor, while the *qāḍī* engages *concrete fact* . . . the mufti leaves the truth of *facts* to be *determined* by the *requestor*, while in the court the *facts are tried* through evidentiary procedures . . . the fatwa is personal and singular . . . while the judgement [of a *qāḍī*] is relatively *public and multiple*."[65] Given that the ruling of the mufti was a general (*ʿāmm*) interpretation of the law, it was possible that the legal rationale (*ʿilla*) could be applied to other contexts. Though the mufti issued "personal and singular" interpretations, these held within them the capacity for the mufti to encourage or prohibit particular behaviors on the basis of textual evidence and prior communal consensus.

A fatwa is a means by which the tradition reinforcing prior legal precedent confronted the challenge to traditional precedent posed by contemporary

circumstances within a highly structured semantic and hermeneutical negotiation. The interpretation of the sources of the law, however, remained open for the mufti. Gradually, this allowed for substantial interpretative variety across the schools of Sunni legal thought—what Brinkley Messick has called "interpretative dynamism."[66] Every encounter between the mufti, the *mustaftī*, and a given legal question is, ultimately, a unique and solitary encounter with the tradition and authority of the law. However, as Hallaq has suggested, once these fatwas were codified and cited in other legal texts, including the fatwas of other muftis, the possibility for customary practice to change the interpretation of the law, or vice versa, was established. If understood as a "socio-legal tool," a fatwa, as Hallaq has claimed, is an instrument by which muftis, with the assistance of those summarizing and compiling their fatwas, were able to effect substantial social change and legal modification.[67] Through the fatwa, the law is revivified, and its tradition is renewed once again in a manner that ensures the law's continued validity to a given society. The agents of the production of the fatwa are therefore granted a negotiated stake in the maintenance and the renewal of the law.

The relationship between the mufti and the *mustaftī* opened within the rules and expectations of their performed physical encounter that demanded of the *mustaftī* to seek the authoritative guidance of the mufti and demanded of the mufti to produce a careful assessment of the circumstances surrounding the situation of the questioner. Messick, observing the mufti-*mustaftī* relationship in Yemen, noted that unlike the procedural ruling of a judge (qadi), the interpretative project of a mufti is quite the opposite: "the tension between the dictates of textual theory and the circumstances of actual cases results, in a fatwa, in a 'reading' of textual theory, while in a judgment it leads to a 'reading' of practical fact."[68] The concern of the mufti is not necessarily the particular circumstances of the *mustaftī* but, instead, all of the dimensions of the question that will aid his identification of the appropriate precedents in his sources. Such precedents will come from different sources depending on the method and practices of the mufti's law school (*madhhab*).

The relationships between the mufti and the textual tradition, alongside that between the mufti and the *mustaftī*, changed with the destabilization of Islamic legal institutions and discourses following the arrival of the technological, social, and political upheavals brought by European projects of colonialism and modernization. Two developments in particular—a shift to mass production and mass broadcast for the dissemination of fatwas and the displacement of public religiosity to the private sphere as a result of projects

of secularization—created fertile conditions for what Ahmad Atif Ahmad has called the "*ijtihād*-for-all paradigm," a project of reform launched by scholars such as the Yemeni jurist Muhammad al-Shawkani (1759–1834), Muhammad ʿAbduh, Rashid Rida, and ʿAbd al-Razzaq al-Sanhuri.[69] This paradigm describes the appropriation of terms such as *ijtihād*, "which was destined to lose its technical denoting of the efforts of a trained jurist, either within a *madhhab* or independently."[70] The traditional philosophies of jurisprudence, and the techniques and methods they informed, were scattered and decentralized, and this displacement was the catalyst for establishing the necessary circumstances for multiple authors across the globe to restructure the purposes of fatwas.

The introduction of mass-produced fatwas—disseminated first through newspapers such as ʿAbduh and Rida's *al-Manār* and later over satellite broadcast such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi's *Sharīʿa wa-l-Ḥayāt* on Al Jazeera—heralded a new "imagined community" of Islamic jurisprudence, to borrow a phrase from Anderson, that "created languages-of-power of a kind different from the older administrative vernaculars."[71] Anderson intended that these languages-of-power had an actual effect on language itself; European vernaculars survived or perished based on their ability to be transferred to emerging print media. For the production and dissemination of fatwas, I argue that the new languages-of-power were not linguistic in origin but rather hermeneutic. The new languages-of-power spoke the language of an idealized moral subjectivity that was to be shaped and disciplined, not by modern institutions of power but in the encounter between the mufti and the *mustaftī* in the fatwa. Here, again, I note Abdulmutallab's argument that a fatwa introduced a relationship between the questioner (*mustaftī*) and the mufti that saw the reader select muftis on the basis of legal knowledge that resonated with the individual.

This idealized moral subjectivity emerged from a relative decline in the political importance of the fatwa to the disciplinary and hegemonic needs of the modern nation-state. Although many nations, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, have retained Dar al-Ifta' (an institution of fatwa issuance) as part of their legislative structure, modernizing projects such as the Ottoman Mejelle and the reforms of al-Sanhuri in Egypt, Iraq, and elsewhere, reorganized the authority of executive and legislative apparatuses in society away from institutions governing in the interest of shared public morality—a move that Jihadi-Salafis will argue violates the sovereignty of the law. Talal Asad has stated that the modern idea of secular society "included a distinctive relation

between state law and personal morality, such that religion became essentially a matter of (private) belief—a society presupposing a range of personal sensibilities and public discourses that emerged in Western Europe at different points in time together with the formation of the modern nation state."[72] Stripped of their political importance, fatwas were soon used to address this shortcoming of the nation-state. The appropriation of terms such as *ijtihād* (independent legal reasoning) and *taqlīd* (tradition) by the reformers, led to traditional institutions, such as al-Azhar, to "compensate for the loss of power to secular institutions by becoming society's 'moral guardians,' embracing an idea of morality that was both 'pervasive and limited' and investing symbolic issues with an 'excessive religiosity.' "[73] The enduring connection between the mufti and the *mustaftī* provided one possible outlet of continued moral instruction. Yet what of those muftis, such as those accepting the Jihadi-Salafi persuasion, who do not accept the institutional authority of the Azhar on the basis of their insistence on the precedent of the Salaf?

The alienated relationship of the mufti and the *mustaftī* in the contemporary period is magnified by the ever-expanding accessibility of the Internet and satellite telecommunications. With the rise of new communications technologies and Internet website fatwas, muftis may never meet those to whom they are issuing rulings, much less have the opportunity to inquire into their moral probity and honesty. Further, once their rulings have been issued, the nature of the Internet—a wide-ranging scale, the possibility of the iterability of information, and the retention of archived information—limits the ability of an issuing mufti to recant or edit an original opinion. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who initially supported martyrdom operations in Israel and Palestine citing precedents from all four Sunni schools of thought, later nuanced his position, but this has not stopped some from continuing to use his initial fatwa as legitimating further martyrdom-seeking actions.[74] The once "personal and singular" relationship of the mufti and the *mustaftī* through the medium of broadcast and broadband technologies became "public yet alienated."

Whereas the *mustaftī* stood in deference to the mufti, this has now switched. The mufti must now be the one who, in the words of Asad, answers to the questioning individual, because "the individual is now encouraged—in morality as well as in law—to govern himself or herself, as befits the citizen of a secular, liberal society."[75] If a society wished to transform into a modern, civilized nation-state, then it needed to birth, raise, train, and discipline citizens who relied on their own individual reason for maintaining social order

and disciplined self-government. Asad noted that this point applied particularly, if not exclusively, to upper-class individuals who had a vested interest in maintaining the administrative regulation of the state for their own class interests.[76] If a mufti was consulted by an agent of the state, it was for the purposes of lesser, social questions, such as those involving family law. The force of law, however, remained with the new bureaucrats of law trained in the codified precedents constructed on European legal theories and legitimated by the disciplinary power of police and military forces.

The displacement of the office of the mufti from the personal performance of legal interpretation in the service of a dynamic community of faith has not resulted in a diminished or disappearing public role in the performance of legal interpretation. Rather, quite the opposite is true. Alexandre Caeiro notes that Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the Egyptian-born scholar often considered the first "global mufti," stresses that "a mufti must speak the language of his times."[77] Caeiro quotes Qaradawi as expressing his disagreement with Abu Zakariya al-Nawawi and Abu al-Hasan al-Mawardi (974–1058), both of whom believed that a mufti should not act like a "teacher." Instead, Caeiro claims, Qaradawi argues that the mufti must be "a mufti, teacher, advisor, doctor, and guide . . . so that the ignorant may be informed, the doubter may gain confidence, the rejecter may be convinced, the arrogant may be defeated, the apprentice scholar may increase his knowledge, and the believer his faith."[78] Unlike their predecessors, contemporary fatwas are not always produced by the authority of an institution or a school. At times, they may be produced by the charismatic authority of a mufti. Yet more often, a fatwa is a mediation of a mufti's attempt to meet the needs of a global reading audience while participating in a community of like-minded jurists who themselves may convey or withdraw their acceptance of the interpretative act.

Jihadi-Salafi Legal Authority and Online Legal Traditions

In response to the crises of tradition and authority facing their community, early Muslim jurists and legists worked to ensure that the prophetic example would survive and thrive for those who would follow them. With each fatwa issued and legal ruling produced, jurisprudents slowly built legal institutions that preserved multiple bodies of positive law, legal theory, and interpretation meant to guide Muslim communities through circumstances

unforeseen in the original revelation. In the modern world, the displacement of those traditions opened up new modes of fatwa issuance—amid other genres of texts claiming scholarly authority such as pamphlets, speeches, interviews, and even monograph-length treatments of questions. This is textual production as "competitive business," as Bunt describes it.[79] In the case of those fatwas and texts that challenge prevailing political, spiritual, legal, or economic authorities—such as Jihadi-Salafi discourses on jihad and martyrdom—such materials are undoubtedly responsive to the needs and demands of an audience. As an example, Abdulmutallab revealed that jurisprudence was competitive. Just as those early Muslim legal communities began to form bodies of authoritative literature, however, so, too, have Jihadi-Salafis, and just like those communities, Jihadi-Salafi jurists have started to compile their fatwas and other discussions, albeit online.

Reuven Paz has labeled these Jihadi-Salafi websites the "Open University for Jihad Studies," from which those sympathetic with the Jihadi-Salafi cause can obtain legal advice, edification, and instruction in the Jihadi-Salafi *minhāj*. Bunt argues that due to the networked nature of the Internet, the jihad waged by Jihadi-Salafis is an "e-jihad," waged by Jihadi-Salafi "iMuslims."[80] Although these may sound like vague theoretical terms, these concepts rest on an essential aspect of the Internet-based Jihadi-Salafi school: the idea of a global community existing outside and in opposition to hegemony of traditional structures of authority and security. There is no published statement on the website indicating the methodology for selecting texts to be posted on the Minbar. Outside of the networks of education and communication within which a few of these scholars participated, the presence of their works on the Minbar is considered sufficient evidence of their identification by the Jihadi-Salafi community as having ideas sympathetic to or congruent with the Jihadi-Salafi *ʿaqīda* and *minhāj*.

Through this gradual process of collection, collation, and archiving, the boundaries of legal and theological authority begin to emerge. Juridical authority is difficult to quantify. Hallaq argues that the initial emergence of Sunni Islamic legal schools in the middle of the tenth century CE occurred through the emergence of a comprehensive juristic doctrine.[81] Authority, understood by Hallaq as the ability either to issue a ruling or to have a ruling recognized as "authoritative" on the basis of its adhering to a process of legal determination, emerged in Islamic legal literature through juristic typologies, "a form of discourse that reduces the community of legal specialists into manageable, formal categories, taking into consideration the entire historical

and synchronic range of that community's juristic activities and functions."[82] Such typologies allow one to understand that authority emerges through a negotiation with and differentiation from others claiming authority—a project that is ongoing in the estimation of Grewal.[83] Al-ʿAwlaki's lectures are held to have more authority than, let's say, Abdulmutallab's act, because the former performs the role of legal and theological scholar in a fashion deemed more authentic than the latter, as Abdulmutallab himself admits.

It is far too early to expect a fully mature juridical typology to have emerged from Jihadi-Salafi thought. Such a process took centuries in Sunni Islamic legal theory. However, two conversations—on martyrdom operations and on the declarations of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's caliphal project in Iraq and Syria—reveal the emergence of preliminary typologies of Jihadi-Salafi legal and theological debates. This suggests the emergence of a Jihadi-Salafi legal tradition, one that agrees on principles of creed but may disagree, as we will see in our discussion of martyrdom operations, on the realization of the principles as a methodology.

A Jihadi-Salafi Archive: The Minbar al-Tawhid wa-l-Jihad

Until 2015, before the rise of social-media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Telegram, JustPaste.it became favored by Jihadi-Salafis for circulating texts, hosting debates, and providing news, among the most popular clearinghouses for their legal and theological texts was the Minbar al-Tawhid wa-l-Jihad or, as the translators of its English-language version called it, "The Rostrum of Monotheism and Jihad." From its inception, the Minbar foregrounded the work of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi (b. 1959). Born Isam al-Barqawi in 1959 in Barqa, near Nablus, Palestine, al-Maqdisi argued for the necessity of defensive struggle to protect the *ʿaqīda* and *minhāj* of Muslims but did so while remaining reserved about those whom he considered disbelievers, leading Wagemakers to label him a "Quietist Jihadi."[84] Though al-Maqdisi's discussions of *tawḥīd, ḥākimiyya, takfīr, al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ*, and jihad always had their own section on the site, referred to as his "library" (*maktaba*), over its history, the site grew to encompass a selection of the Salafi canon and discussions by contemporary Jihadi authors on a range of subjects.

Not much is recorded of its early history. The Internet Archive records that the earliest version of the Minbar, dating to February 2, 2001, was hosted

at al-maqdese.com—in the time of the Second Intifada, and, as I show in chapter 3, al-Maqdisi's first major statement on martyrdom operations. The Minbar then appeared on tawhed.com on March 30, 2002, six months after the US war in Afghanistan against the Taliban and al-Qaʿida began.[85] On its home page was a colorful banner proclaiming a special page dedicated to "The War of the Crusaders against the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan."[86] The youngest of the three, tawhed.ws, dates to at least August 19, 2002.[87] At the top right of its home page is a rider on horseback, an often-used Jihadi cultural icon.[88] In later versions, this rider, always depicted in full shadow, would hoist a sword and flag aloft, sitting atop a rearing horse, superimposed over a globe. To the immediate right, readers were offered links taking them to the collected works of al-Maqdisi, to assorted texts on the "Methodology of the Sunna"—including on *ʿaqīda*, the "neglected duty" (i.e., jihad), legal issues, histories, and even fatwas—and finally, spoken lectures. Eventually, mirrored versions of the Minbar would appear at additional URLs: alsunnah.info (December 13, 2002), abu-qatada.com (March 29, 2004, named after Abu Qatada al-Filastini), and mtj.tw (December 13, 2007).[89]

All of these versions would disappear in June 2015. Following the January 2015 attacks on the offices of the French magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, a self-described Internet "vigilante" group calling itself Ghost Security, or GhostSec for short, announced that it would begin an earnest attempt to remove all ISIS-related content from the Internet. Believed by some security experts to be an offshoot of the Internet hacker collective Anonymous, GhostSec followed similar tactics to those of Anonymous: creative use of Twitter and other social-media platforms to publicize their successful hacks and takedowns of targeted accounts.[90] One such strike occurred on the Minbar shortly before the declaration by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi of an ISIS caliphate in late June 2015. On May 26, 2015, Twitter accounts belonging to "anonymous_b312" (@AnonymousB312) and "Nage" (@NageAnon) posted: "tawed.ws is #TangoDown #OpISIS #OpIceISIS," with "Tango Down" being a popular film and video-game euphemism for killing a terrorist.[91] Over the next two months, multiple accounts would confirm that the Minbar URL tawhed.ws and its mirror sites were inaccessible. The final version archived by the Internet Archive was uploaded May 22, 2015.[92] Since at least March 20, 2016, the Minbar has been relocated to the URL ilmway.com. In its initial form, it featured a photo of ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Rahman (1938–2017), the "Blind Shaykh," who helped plan the attack on the World Trade Center in 1993.

Across the entirety of the versions of the pre-cyber-attack version of the Minbar, readers were greeted by what was called "This, Our Call" (*Hādhihi Daʿwatunā*):

> A call [*daʿwa*] to migrate [*hijra*] toward God, which allows one's open assertion of God's oneness [*tawḥīd*] while renouncing *shirk* and slander. . . . A *daʿwa* to making God's oneness manifest by announcing the indissoluble bonds of the faith and the fissure created by the *milla* of Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm (upon them both be peace) that made manifest those who are loyal to *ṭawḥīd* and who have renounced the people of *shirk*. A *daʿwa* to achieve *tawḥīd* through a struggle against all tyrants [*ṭawāghīt*] by the tongue and the lance so that the servants [*ʿubbād*] worship not other servants, but the Lord of all servants, and abandon all arbitrary methodologies, laws, and religions for the justice and light of God. . . . A call to join the caravan of the victorious sect [*ṭāʾifa al-manṣūra*], established upon the religion of God, who are unharmed by those opposing them and will persist toward the command of God.[93]

Within this self-understanding is an invitation to the reader to participate in the Jihadi-Salafi project. Significant aspects of the Jihadi-Salafi creed are present; readers are encouraged to migrate toward God in order to affirm God's oneness and renounce disbelief. Such a move necessitates a struggle (*jihād*) against all tyrannical political powers. To explore this call, readers coming to the site were greeted with the option to read texts of creed (*ʿaqīda*), listen to interviews, see debates on the rulings from various Sunni Islamic legal schools, seek fatwas from jurists hosted by the Minbar, and, of course, read selections of legal and theological texts justifying the "neglected duty" (*al-farīḍa al-ghāʾiba*)—struggle in God's cause.

The Anonymous or GhostSec #OpISIS campaign made it clear that they considered the Minbar account to be a platform for ISIS supporters. Ironically, the Minbar was fervently *anti*-ISIS: al-Maqdisi and his ally Abu Qatada al-Filastini, among others, had been active on the site in recent months, condemning renegade ISIS fighters and denouncing the caliphal project of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and the so-called Zarqawists, former supporters of Abu Musʿab al-Zarqawi, supporting it.[94] As Brian Fishman notes, for al-Maqdisi, the condemnation was personal—his own son, ʿUmar ʿIzz al-Din, once imprisoned by the United States in Iraq in 2004, had fought alongside al-Zarqawi against his father's wishes and would eventually

be killed in 2010.[95] With the Minbar restored to ilmway.com in 2016, al-Maqdisi—or those curating the website for him—began to actively condemn those with whom they had once shared affinity but who had moved into the "extremism" of the Caliphate.

Legal Discussions of Martyrdom Operations and the Minbar: Approaching Typologies

When the Minbar was rereleased in 2016, it kept its previous structure. The website offered viewers a list of classical texts penned by Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Ibn Kathir, and Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab. From the twentieth century were Sayyid Qutb, Muhammad ʿAbd al-Salam Faraj, ʿAbd al-Qadir bin ʿAbd al-Aziz (aka Dr. Fadl or Sayyid Imam), ʿAbdullah ʿAzzam, Abu Musʿab al-Suri, and Anwar al-ʿAwlaki. Those seeking out the literature on martyrdom operations would find the fatwas and legal texts under a section titled "Fiqh al-Jihad," in the forum (*muntadā*) for submitting questions to the website's fatwa council, and in numerous author pages. Over the years, the number of authors featured on the Minbar had grown. A study of the Minbar by William McCants and Jarret Brachman in 2006 found that al-Maqdisi was the most prolific on the website but that numerous other authors were present. This included Abu Qatada al-Filastini (b. 1959/1960 as ʿUmar ibn Mahmud ibn ʿUthman), a Palestinian-Jordanian mufti who fought in Pakistan, was sympathetic to Bin Ladin's al-Qaʿida organization, and was locked in a years-long legal struggle with the United Kingdom after Jordan sought his extradition on charges related to the monarchy's millennium eve celebrations.[96]

Al-Qaʾida

Writings from al-Qaʿida leaders and operatives were also posted. These included Bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri. Yusuf al-ʿUyayri (alternative spelling al-Ayeri or al-Ayiri)published a fatwa discussing the usage of martyrdom operations in Chechnya.[97] Abu Ayman al-Hilali also published; his identity remains a mystery, but he likely was a strategist and interpreter.[98] Another strategist, Abu Saʿd al-Amili (birthdate unknown), remains a relatively little-known figure.[99]

Al-Shuʿaybi and His School

Other than al-Maqdisi and al-Filastini, the only other scholars featured on the website discussing martyrdom operations at that time were Hamud bin ʿUqla al-Shuʿaybi (1925/1927–2001) and his students, ʿAli bin Khudayr al-Khudayr (b. 1954), Nasir al-Fahd (b. 1969), and Sulayman al-ʿUlwan (b. 1969, sometimes spelled al-ʿAlwan). Al-Shuʿaybi, who was born in eastern Saudi Arabia, studied with Ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAziz ibn ʿAbd Allah ibn Baz prior to the latter's appointment as the grand mufti of Saudi Arabia from 1993 to 1999. Al-Shuʿaybi rose to popularity after he was publicly critical of the monarchy—demanding a restoration of scholarly authority—and supported the fighting in Afghanistan and Chechnya after the members of the Saudi Sahwa movement would not.[100] Al-Maqdisi viewed al-Shuʿaybi with fondness, publishing a letter penned to him following his death in 2001.[101] Al-Khudayr was born in Riyadh and studied at Imam University under al-Shuʿaybi and would later join the Sahwa movement before his eventual imprisonment in 2003.[102] Al-Fahd, who was an outspoken critic of the Sahwa and monarchy, would meet al-Shuʿaybi after his first release from prison in 1998. He has been imprisoned since 2003.[103] Al-ʿUlwan, whose brother-in-law was al-ʿUyayri, was born in Burayda, Saudi Arabia, and rose to prominence among Jihadi-Salafis in Saudi Arabia after aligning himself with what would eventually be called al-Shuʿaybi's "school" by penning fatwas in defense of martyrdom-seeking operations and the iconoclasm of the Taliban.[104]

The Later Additions

After 2006, new discussions were added to the "Fiqh al-Jihad" section of the Minbar. While those of the al-Shuʿaybi school, al-Filastini, and al-Qaʿida remained, the additional voices added a variety of backgrounds. The one-time colleague of Abu Qatada and al-Maqdisi, Abu Basir al-Tartusi, who was born ʿAbd al-Munʿim Mustafa Halima in Tartus, Syria, considered martyrdom operations of limited but permissible use.[105] ʿAbd al-Hakim Hassan, Hamid bin ʿAbd Allah ʿAli (b. 1960), and Abu Yahya al-Libi (1963–2012)—all of them affiliated with al-Qaʿida—were added. Al-Libi, who was the head of the Libyan Fighting Group, which was at one time part of al-Qaʿida in the Islamic Maghrib (AQIM), was killed in a US drone strike in Pakistan in 2012.[106] ʿAbd al-Hakim Hasan (b. 1959), who is likely also known as Shaykh

ʾIsa al-Masri, was a former member of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad whom al-Zawahiri identified in his *Tabrīʿa* as one of the most valuable contemporary theorists of jihad.[107] Hamid bin ʿAbd Allah Ahmad al-ʿAli was a teacher of Islamic culture at the College of Primary Education in Kuwait, who studied the Shariʿa at the Islamic University in Medina. He eventually became a head of the Salafi movement in Kuwait.[108]

Others added had fewer direct links to al-Qaʿida or al-Maqdisi and, often, would likely have rejected their inclusion on the website. Yet, as the site itself claims, those featured are those whom the managers of the website see as being in agreement with Jihadi-Salafi positions. This includes Bishr bin Fahd al-Bishr, who was at one time a member of the Sahwa movement in Saudi Arabia; ʿAbd al-Akhir Hammad al-Ghunaymi, a former senior leader in Egypt's al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya; and finally, Al-Amin al-Hajj Muhammad Ahmad, a university professor in Khartoum.[109] Yahya Hashim Hasan Farghal (1933–2011) attended the College for Usul al-Fiqh at al-Azhar, where he worked for most of his career.

Al-Zarqawi, the Shariʿa Council of the Minbar, and the Project of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi

Even a quick glance at the list of names above may give us some idea of why Abdulmutallab claimed that the fatwas supporting jihad and martyrdom were overwhelming. The Minbar brings together texts from across Islamic history and, as we will see elsewhere, places those texts into direct conversation with contemporary events, calling upon the faithful to answer God's invitation to sell oneself in God's cause. Within the first five years of the Minbar's existence, slight fault lines emerged; there were al-Maqdisi and Abu Qatada, authors affiliated with al-Qaʿida Central and its affiliates, and then those who were unaffiliated. The geographies covered were substantial: Afghanistan (in the case of Bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri), Chechnya (in the case of al-ʿUyayri), Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Libya, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan.

Within what would seem like a monolith, however, emerged public fractures. Following the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, al-Zarqawi, who had been dispatched to Iraq by Bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri at the encouragement of al-Libi to prepare an insurgency against the US, Iraqi, and coalition

forces, began to implement his plans to transform his al-Qaʿida in Iraq movement into a functional state.[110] So great was the violence his movement inflicted upon Shiʿi and Sunni communities in Iraq that al-Zarqawi gained the attention of his one-time mentor, al-Maqdisi, as well as Bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri—all of whom publicly admonished him in interviews and letters (as I will discuss in chapter 4).

From that time forward, al-Maqdisi would find himself increasingly under attack by fellow Jihadi-Salafis who felt that he had failed to understand the truth and reality of the possibility that Iraq and later Syria presented to the establishment of an Islamic state. As Wagemakers notes, around 2008, a series of documents emerged questioning al-Maqdisi's legal authority given that he had refused to go forth and fight in Iraq.[111] In the estimation of writers such as Abu Qudama Salih al-Hami, who claimed to be al-Zarqawi's brother-in-law, al-Maqdisi was not different from a missionary, reminding Muslims of good morals but little else. One needed to be on the front, fighting, if one wished to speak with true authority. In an attempt to protect the reputation of the Minbar and emphasize those he deemed "good" Jihadis—who avoided random and unnecessary violence while acting with a solid plan for the future—he established a Shariʿa Council for the Minbar in 2009.[112] This council, consisting of twelve hand-picked scholars, all had contributed to the Minbar's fatwa-issuance forum and, by 2011, had produced enough jurisprudential material to fill thirteen volumes of text. Most of the members remained in relative obscurity except for two: Abu al-Mundhir al-Shinqiti and Abu Humam al-Athari.

With the arrival of the phenomena collectively referred to by observers as the Arab Spring, however, the earlier fault lines became more pronounced. al-Shinqiti, a prolific Mauritanian scholar about whom little is known, took advantage. With the destabilization sweeping the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa and the brief imprisonment of his mentor, al-Maqdisi, al-Shinqiti began to articulate a new brand for Jihadi-Salafis. In April 2011, AQAP rebranded under the authority of ʿAdil bin ʿAbd Allah al-Abab. It did so in the midst of its fight against the Yemeni government of then-president Ali Abdullah Saleh (1947–2017), declaring for itself a new name, Ansar al-Shariʿa ("Supporters of the Shariʿa"), in an attempt, it said, to rectify the earlier mistakes the group had committed and to distance itself from those errors.[113] The group was soon joined by others claiming the same name and

creed in Tunisia, Libya, Morocco, and Egypt. On May 29, 2012, slightly more than one year after the Yemeni declaration, al-Shinqiti published a brief essay titled "*Nahnu ansar al-shariʿa*" ("We Are the Supporters of the Shariʿa"), wherein he explained the adoption of this name for the broader Jihadi-Salafi movement as part of a rebranding meant to emphasize the unity of the Jihadi-Salafi community.[114]

Criticism of the move was swift. Abu Basir al-Tartusi issued a staunch warning to al-Shinqiti, arguing that the Ansar were overusing martyrdom operations. Abu al-Zubayr ʿAdil ʿUbab, who remains relatively unknown, along with Abu Humam al-Athari of the Shariʿa Council, joined al-Shinqiti in launching a stark and strict response to Abu Basir.[115] As Wagemakers found, this touched off a sweeping set of responses and debates of the Ansar in Libya, Egypt, and Yemen.[116] In 2012, amid this debate, Abu Saʿd al-Amili authored a brief fatwa, published on a now-defunct forum, titled "The Duty for the Support and Victory of Jabhat al-Nusra," in what he hoped would help to heal the rifts in the ranks of those fighting in Syria and Iraq.[117] Shortly after, al-Amili would publicly lament the abandonment of secure Internet forums for public Twitter and Facebook feeds, which, he argued, was leading the dissent and the decline in quality discussions within the movement.[118] The Jihadi-Salafi infighting would not be assuaged by al-Amili's attempt—in part because Jabhat al-Nusra found itself locked in a debate with the rapidly emerging ISIS.

By 2016, well into the declared caliphate of Baghdadi, Wagemakers observed a rift emerging online between the "Maqdisiyyun," those who remained loyal to and aligned with al-Maqdisi, and the "Zarqawiyyun," those supportive of the Islamic State project. Some debated the legitimacy of the state itself, while others debated the dimensions and importance and scholarly authority for guidance in jihad.[119] Perhaps the most enduring of these rifts, one that rivaled al-Maqdisi losing his former pupil al-Zarqawi, was the open break between al-Maqdisi and his student al-Athari—who in reality was Turki al-Binʿali (1984–2017), born Taha Sobhi Falaha and a Bahraini jurist who had once sat on the Shariʿa Council of the Minbar but would soon serve as the grand mufti of ISIS.[120] Among the final messages he sent to al-Maqdisi was one titled "My Former Shaykh," in which he rejected the idea of al-Maqdisi's scholarly authority and, as Bunzel argues, demonstrates "the assured spirit of a younger generation of jihadis ready and willing to break with an established cadre of jihadi intellectuals and carve their own path."[121]

Conclusion

The Minbar al-Tawhid wa-l-Jihad became a forum for several aspects of what I argue is an emerging Jihadi-Salafi legal tradition. First, just as the Sunni jurists discussed by El Shamsy once did, Jihadi-Salafis on the Minbar declared and identified a canon of classical and modern texts deemed authoritative for their creed and methodology. Over time, what once appeared a common community of scholars began to show demonstrable fractures. Much as they have done throughout the history of Islamic legal communities, these fractures emerged on matters of doctrine and its application in daily life. As Hallaq notes, it is in the very nature of interpretation of the Shariʿa—which encourages debate on legal questions—that legal authorities form, rupture, and reconstitute.[122] As these Jihadi-Salafis debated the law, they argued—through the genres of fatwas and letters and through the medium of the Internet—over the correct way to implement and realize God's law on earth. In part, this attempt to resolve the question of legal authority was driven by the relative equality provided by the Minbar. As noted, one of the dilemmas facing Jihadi-Salafis as a legal community is the pluralistic effects modern technology has had on the question of legal authority. Jurists are in competition with one another. For Abdulmutallab and other like-minded, self-motivated, and self-proclaimed Jihadi-Salafis, these debates are read as debates among intellectual equals and are seen as preponderant proof of the necessity for Jihadi. As we saw in the example of al-Binʿali and al-Maqdisi, as well as al-Zarqawi and al-Maqdisi, however, these debates also reveal that the resolution of the question of authority itself is implicated in physicality. The divisions forming typologies within Jihadi-Salafi legal thought are those that align with arguments related to self-renunciation. The question faced by al-Maqdisi is a question faced by many Jihadi-Salafi scholars: is the value of experience in the battlefield equal to experienced gained after years of thoughtful study? For ISIS fighters, the answer was no. Complete authority came only through willing self-renunciation in pursuit of martyrdom.

2

Performing a Renunciative Unity

On Jihadi-Salafi ʿ*Aqīda* and *Minhāj*

> "The reasons why someone picks up a gun or throws a bomb represent an ineluctably personal choice born variously of grievance and frustration; religious piety or the desire for systemic socio-economic change; irredentist conviction or commitment to revolution. Joining an organization in pursuit of these aims is meant to give collective meaning and equally importantly cumulative power to this commitment. The forces that impel individuals to become terrorists and insurgents are thus timeless." —Bruce Hoffman[1]

A *Gift* in Gaza: Explaining the Failures of Secularism

Following a *khuṭba* in August 2009 at the mosque of Ibn Taymiyya in the city of Rafah, a few members of the Jund Ansar Allah (JAA), a self-professed Jihadi-Salafi group, found themselves threatened with violence by Hamas after proclaiming the creation of a new Islamic emirate in Palestine/Israel. Tensions between Hamas and the JAA had been high since the JAA began to make its presence known in southern Gaza in November 2008 by openly recruiting against and criticizing members of Hamas. In the weeks prior, the JAA had even launched its own raid on horseback against the Israeli border checkpoint at Karni. In the midst of the fighting was the gravely wounded ʿAbd al-Latif Musa (1959–2009), the head of the movement, who, having finished his declaration of the Islamic emirate while swearing his loyalty to al-Qaʾida and Usama bin Ladin, exited the mosque and was summarily shot along with twenty-one other members of the JAA. One of these was Abu ʿAbd Allah al-Muhajir (d. 2009), also known as Abu Nur, author of *Al-Qawl al-asas fi hukumat hamas* (*The Principle Declaration on the Government of Hamas*), one of the earliest and most-recognized critiques of Hamas penned

And God Knows the Martyrs. Nathan S. French, Oxford University Press (2020) © Oxford University Press.
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by a Jihadi-Salafi author. As the violence subsided, it was widely thought that the Jihadi-Salafis in Gaza, having been chastened sufficiently, would return to relative obscurity as a quiescent minority.[2] While other Jihadi-Salafi movements, such as the Jaysh al-Umma in Gaza and the Sheikh Omar Hadid Brigade have survived in Gaza, the strike on the JAA proved nearly fatal to the future of the movement.

What emerged from these events was a *Gift*—of sorts. In the months following the violence, few noticed the conversation that emerged between Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi and another online Palestinian mufti, Abu al-Walid al-Maqdisi (born Hisham al-Saʿidni, 1969–2012), who, before his death in an Israeli air strike, was head of the Gazan Jihadi-Salafi Shariʿa Council for the Community of the Assertion of Monotheism and Jihad (*al-Lajnat al-sharʿiyya fī jamāʿat al-tawḥīd wa-l-jihād*). Prior to the events in August, Abu al-Walid and his council coauthored a lengthy treatise titled "Tuhfat al-muwahhidin fi aham masaʾil usul al-din" ("The Gift of the Asserters of the Divine Unity on the Most Important Matters of the Foundations of the Faith"). The original version of this work, which drew heavily on the ideas of al-Maqdisi, Sayyid Qutb, and several members of the Jihadi-Salafi community, also featured a brief introduction from the council itself.[3]

In the *Gift*, Abu al-Walid attempted to explain to his readers why Palestine was not different in its failures from any other contemporary Arab Muslim country. In the section "Taghut (al-ʿAlmaniyya)," Abu al-Walid identified what he deemed the results of secularism (*al-ʿalmāniyya*) in the Arab and Muslim worlds. His choice of *ṭaghūt* was likely intentional. The term *ṭaghūt* appears in the Qurʾan where it refers to idols or other evil forces of oppression, but in the usage of Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab, it has four possible meanings, two of which critique political or religious leadership that governs or worships on the basis of other than what God intended.[4] In the 1970s, Muhammad ʿAbd al-Salam Faraj labeled the Egyptian government of his day a tyrannical power (*ṭaghūt*), governing by other than what God had revealed and, therefore, in a state of disbelief necessitating fighting.[5] Although Abu al-Walid was critical of Hamas's democratic governance—agreeing with Qutb that any pursuit of democracy was a challenge to God's divine sovereignty—he traced the systematic failures that secularism brought to Arabs.

At its core, Abu al-Walid argued, secularism violated God's sovereign unity, thereby replacing God's divine Shariʿa revealed through God's Prophet Muhammad with man-made laws.[6] By distorting Islam—as a religion and

a rich historical tradition—secularism portrayed the golden ages of Islamic progress and politics as a time of "barbarism and chaos."[7] With their calls to patriotism (*qawmiyya*) and nationalism (*waṭaniyya*), programs of secularism attempt to replace the unity of the Muslim community under *tawḥīd* with various identities that will demolish any possibility for the restoration of God's justice.[8] Secularism also targeted education, he wrote, removing from the minds of the community the memory of the Shariʿa and replacing it with inauthentic materialism. Over time, he noted, this led to moral degradation—the destruction of the family and rampant sexual immorality—and active resistance to any possible call to Islam.[9] At the same time, secularists and their complicit Muslim accomplices stripped Islamic belief and practice of the duty to go forth and fight in God's cause.[10]

The solution to this problem, Abu al-Walid concluded, was not mere reeducation. "By knowledge," he wrote, "we do not mean an understanding of a few issues of the jurisprudence of positive law [*qaḍāyā al-fiqhiyya al-farʿiyya*], nor do we mean literature or appropriate customary behaviors . . . by knowledge [*ʿilm*] we mean that which bequeathed a sound devoted faith [*imān*] of the heart [*qalb*] shaped by a love of God, His Messenger, and His religion."[11] Such knowledge will create the possibility of political capability (*tamkīn*) and a restoration of God's law, but it will only come through a willingness to spend and sacrifice of themselves in God's cause.[12] It is that knowledge, Abu al-Walid cautions, that secularism will ultimately attempt to disrupt—the knowledge granting the faithful the willingness to spend their lives and wealth freely in defense of their faith.

One month after the events of August 2009, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi published the work to the Minbar. He added his own introduction, dated to Shawwal 1430/September 2009, wherein he offered his full endorsement of Abu al-Walid's analysis of Arab nationalism and secularism and extended a welcome to the Gazan Jihadi-Salafi movement. Al-Maqdisi offered Abu al-Walid a position on the legal council of the Minbar. Al-Maqdisi claims in the introduction that the book addresses the most important questions of any student seeking clarification on matters related to affirming the divine unity (*tawḥīd*), faith (*imān*), and creed (*ʿaqīda*), but he is careful to note that the council of Abu al-Walid differs from the Shariʿa Council featured on the Minbar. Though both councils are presented with similar questions on matters of creed and methodology (*minhāj*), al-Maqdisi notes that "[the members of the Gazan council] are our brothers who demand the best knowledge and who assist with *tawḥīd* and jihad in Gaza."[13] After receiving

the *Gift* of Abu al-Walid, al-Maqdisi, one of the more widely recognized authorities in Jihadi-Salafi thought, reciprocated with a present of his own: a glowing endorsement of the Jihadi-Salafi *ʿaqīda, minhāj*, and movement in Gaza.

Two years later, after extraordinary strategic failures in Gaza at the hands of the Israeli Defense Forces, Abu al-Walid took to the Internet once again, posting a book on the Shumukh al-Islam Internet forum and on the Minbar al-Tawhid wal-l-Jihad titled *Questions and Honest Answers with Shaykh Abu al-Walid, amir of the Jamaʿat al-Tawhid wa-l-Jihad* (*Ajwabat al-laqaʾ al-maftuh maʿ al-shaykh al-mujahid Abu al-Walid, amir jamaʿat al-tawhid wa-l-jihad*). Noting that there were structural issues facing the movement—the asymmetry of force between the Israeli Defense Forces and Gazans and the relative unity of Hamas and the Palestinian Authority against the Jihadi-Salafi groups—Abu al-Walid argued that the movement had faced tests (*ibtilāʾ*) but that all struggles required patience (*ṣabr*) in God's cause. His group still believed that the first of the practical steps necessary in Gaza was

> spreading the *minhāj* of *tawḥīd* and consolidating the bonds of the *ʿaqīda* in the souls of the people in order to raise people from their errors and innovations [*bidaʿ*] and their distance from the religion of God [*dīn Allāh*] to the understanding of the Qurʾan and Sunna known by the Salaf of the *umma*.[14]

This work, he argued, would require patience (*ṣabr*) and should not mean a hasty escalation in martyrdom-seeking operations. While he admitted, in general, that preparations were under way for such attacks, he spoke of such martyrdom seekers in reverential terms. One particular questioner asked about cowardice: "A commander ordered one of the brothers to undertake a martyrdom-seeking operation, but the brother refused for a reason drawn from the examples [of prior martyrs]—he lacked sufficient will. Is this a sin?"[15] In his answer, Abu al-Walid did not cast shame on the young man who decided not to seek martyrdom, instead writing:

> If he refused the commander's request because he is concerned that God does not approve of these operations, then there is no sin in that. The commander should be made aware of the different jurisprudence on this matter.[16]

In this allowance, Abu al-Walid opens the possibility of personal will and intentionality in such operations. Though he goes on to condemn those who disobey the order at the last minute—claiming a fear of death or nerves—his acknowledgment that the faithful may have principled disagreements with the act, particularly as related to piety, indicates that though there may be a unified pursuit of creed (*ʿaqīda*), there may be differences in its application (*minhāj*).

Negotiating Creed and Method: Network, Tradition, and Authority in God's Cause

The negotiated endorsement of the Shariʿa Council in Gaza and Abu al-Walid's attempt to explain the repeated failures of his movement emphasize the critical role played by the notion of creed (*ʿaqīda*) to the formation and renewal of global and regional Jihadi-Salafi communities. Shortly after the declaration of his ties with Abu al-Walid, al-Maqdisi announced the creation of his Shariʿa Council on the Minbar.[17] Soon after, Abu al-Mundhir al-Shinqiti emerged as the most prolific author among his colleagues on the council and the most outspoken theorist for Jihadi-Salafism on the website. In April 2011—four months after Abu al-Walid's public forum was released—al-Shinqiti began to articulate a new brand for Jihadi-Salafis. Al-Qaʿida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), under the authority of ʿAdil bin ʿAbd Allah al-Abab, in the midst of their fight against the Yemeni government of then-president Saleh (1947–2017), declared for itself a new name, Ansar al-Shariʿa ("Supporters of the Shariʿa), in an attempt, it said, to rectify the earlier mistakes the group had committed and to distance itself from those errors.[18]

The group was soon joined by others claiming the same name and creed in Tunisia, Libya, Morocco, and Egypt. On May 29, 2012, slightly more than one year after the Yemeni declaration, al-Shinqiti published a brief essay titled "Nahnu ansar al-shariʿa" ("We Are the Supporters of the Shariʿa"), wherein he explained the adoption of this name for the broader Jihadi-Salafi movement.[19] The preference for "Ansar," which al-Shinqiti considers a more precise invocation of the precedent of the Salaf, reveals his appropriation of the earliest narratives of Islamic history and his desire to position his movement as the inheritor of the Shariʿa as it was understood by Muhammad and his closest companions.

Equally, his minimization of "jihad" is meant to distance audiences from the false conclusion that Jihadi-Salafi use of violence is its sole objective.[20] By naming the movement Ansar al-Shariʿa, al-Shinqiti hoped to convey that his movement believes that "the Islamic religion [*dīn*] is a religion of unity, cohesion, and community, which calls for a united front against all enemies."[21] God's command (*amr*) to this community is not mere violent fighting "but also includes all acts of worship, pious deeds, and personal situations" *kul al-ʿibādāt wa-l-qurbāt wa-l-ḥālāt*).[22] Thus, though the name is synonymous with the one in Yemen—a group for which al-Shinqiti affirms his continued support—he notes that Ansar al-Shariʿa knows neither limits nor borders; it is a single, unified people (*umma wāḥida*).[23]

In recent years, scholars have framed exchanges such as those between Abu al-Walid and al-Maqdisi and the call for a borderless, globalized community by al-Shinqiti in terms of the norms of network-based theories of authority and social organization. Such theories argue for the decentralized and acephalous nature of al-Qaʿida and other movements associated with Jihadi-Salafism. At times, those theories have been the work of substantial public debate due to the policy implications of such arguments.[24] Such theories are not unique to Jihadi-Salafi movements. Recent studies of shared social practices among Muslims have tended to focus on anthropological and sociological analyses and not textual discourses.

The Muslim networks described by miriam cooke and Bruce Lawrence, as well as the theories of Islamic social movements advanced by Quintan Wiktorowicz, argue that such networks represent a variously textured but unified whole present within a single, shared social world. For cooke and Lawrence, while individual authority on the Internet is enhanced by the opening of a new marketplace of competing ideas, "the very proliferation of competing sites and the intrinsic democracy of the World Wide Web *undermines any notion of consensual authority*."[25] All times and spaces, for cooke and Lawrence, are immediately available to the cyber-denizen, and as a result of this availability, it becomes increasingly difficult to locate differentiations in the landscape—all space becomes one space, all time becomes one time, all authorities become the same.

The local Jihadi-Salafi community, for Wiktorowicz, bypasses traditional rule-making institutions "by creating endogenously produced sets of understandings about individual behavior . . . [the diffusion of which] creates self-motivated individuals who live according to a Salafi *manhaj* (method), at times irrespective of alternative, legally binding sets of rules or laws."[26] The

decentralized and diffuse nature of authority challenges traditional methods that would search for shared social and political institutions as the ground for the construction of authority and agency. A model, for example, that attempts to account for the shared authority between the legal councils and Gaza on the Minbar as a mode of resource mobilization against local government institutions will often strain to account for the "lone wolf" and open-source jihad narrative of Anwar al-ʿAwlaki and Abu Musʿab al-Suri.

Of course, as discussed in the example of ʿUmar Farouk Abdulmutallab, it is often unclear whom self-mobilized individuals read or follow in their quest for martyrdom. It is unlikely the Tsarnaev brothers had ever heard of Abu al-Walid or found his arguments compelling. Yet, as I argue in this chapter, Jihadi-Salafi debates on creed and methodology do often provide an open interpretation of the causes of suffering in the world and share a prescribed self-renunciation as the adequate response. In my evaluation of the emergence of a Jihadi-Salafi legal tradition, I evaluated how public disagreements on the implementation of the Jihadi-Salafism led, over time, to the fracture of authoritative communities What is present throughout the narratives arguing for open-source jihad and the narratives reflecting a more socialized structure of authority is the common narrative of creed (*ʿaqīda*) and the method (*minhāj*) of its application within society. To neglect the creed and methodology of Jihadi-Salafis is to set aside the explanatory framework for the suffering and evil faced by their communities and the ideal approach each believer must take to address that suffering.

This chapter works to uncover the narratives of theodicy that Jihadi-Salafi authors use to articulate their self-asserted belief in the essential necessity of God to the entirety of human affairs. In the study of religion, Jonathan Z. Smith suggests that such narratives are how individuals and communities create "worlds of meaning, worlds within which men find themselves and in which they choose to dwell."[27] Agreeing that these narratives frame existence itself—allowing the faith to differentiate between truth and falsehood—Margaret Somers writes that creeds are foundational narratives to identify formation:

> These are the stories that social actors use to make sense of—indeed to act in—their lives. Ontological narratives are used to define who we *are*; this in turn can be a precondition for knowing what to *do*. This "doing" will in turn

> produce new narratives and hence, new actions; the relationship between narrative and ontology is processural and mutually constitutive.[28]

So often, traditional narrative studies focus on viewing the identity formation of the movements and individuals constituting the totality of Jihadi-Salafi thought as products of particular postcolonial political, economic, social, or psychological conditions. The movement's narrative becomes a referent for an object located elsewhere, a form of representation of political resistance and grievance camouflaged within religious rhetoric to make it as palatable as possible for as broad an audience as possible. I argue that the Jihadi-Salafi creed, if taken as a body of ontological narratives shaped by a meaningful profession of faith in the divine and the provision made by the divine in this world, is a narrative explaining in succinct terms who Jihadi-Salafis are such that those accepting the narrative are able to articulate a method (*minhāj*) of what to do, how to act, and, perhaps as important, what one will become in this life and the next as a result of accepting the demands of these narratives. The remainder of this chapter will explore the ontological and phenomenological aspects of the Jihadi-Salafi creed articulated by authors on the Minbar in order to establish how such principles are applied in the act of martyrdom operations, the subject of chapter 3.

Theodicy and Asceticism

As I discussed in the introduction, theodicies in the contemporary moment attempt to provide an explanatory rationale for suffering and evil in the world. Yet, as Peter Berger described them, theodices contain narratives explaining both a microcosm and a macrocosm—quite literally a personal and a universal view of the cosmos which provides an explanatory framework for why humans find themselves in the situation they inhabit and what role they may have played in the shaping of that situation.[29] Theodices may explain why evil occurs, or they may explain success in this world or the next. Putting this into religious terms, Berger states:

> The sacred order of the cosmos is reaffirmed, over and over again, in the face of chaos. . . . This [reaffirmation] must be so institutionalized as to

> continue despite the recurrent intrusion into individual and collective experience of the anomic (or, if one prefers, demonizing phenomena of suffering, evil, and above all, death).[30]

If a theodicy is reaffirmed repeatedly, it will emerge as a tradition held in common by a community. As Abu al-Walid noted, however, in our example from Gaza, the nature of the tradition that he argues once held Muslim communities together has eroded to the point of nonexistence. Yet he insists on a return to the creed (*ʿaqīda*) of the community of Salaf to assist in the restoration of his community.

Abu al-Walid argues that the affirmation of God's unicity is what guides the sound application of a prophetic methodology and leads to ultimate victory over the enemies of the faith. This approach, modeled on that of Salaf—which he, ostensibly, understands from texts and his own relationship to recognized authorities such as al-Maqdisi, is realized through the *minhāj*—a methodology that orders oneself within the world. There is a performative aspect to the creed. Such performance is a mode of self-renunciative asceticism or *zuhd*. As Gavin Flood argues, "ascetic traditions are forms of collective memory enacted in the body through praxis and enacted in language through discourse. . . . [They] are the enactment of the memory of tradition, which is also an aspect of cosmology."[31] The memories of tradition bind oneself to a mode of self-renunciative behavior that is world-transformative.

Self-renunciation does not necessitate self-construction, however. In his definition of asceticism, Richard Valantasis reminds us:

> Asceticism consists of any performance resistant to an externally projected or subjectively experienced dominant social or religious context specifically intended (almost as a cognitive impulse) and purposefully performed in order to inaugurate a new and alternative subjectivity. This new subjectivity may be understood both *inter-subjectively* (those people and events constituting the social self of the individual) and *intra-subjectively* (those with whom the agent interacts beyond the social body). Social relationships must be *transformed* in order to support the new and alternative subjectivity. The *symbolic universe or construction of reality must be adapted* and changed in order to explain and sustain the resistant subjectivity.[32]

The memory of tradition to which Abu al-Walid's call for a return to *tawḥīd* points us is one that also allows us to understand the fluidity of legal

authority within the emerging Jihadi-Salafi legal tradition. Abu al-Walid and al-Maqdisi recognize each other *intersubjectively* as constitutive of each other's self-understandings as fellow Muslims and as legal authorities. At the same time, their acceptance of an explanatory narrative for the suffering and failures of their communities signals the transformation of their broader transformed relationships to the non-Jihadi-Salafi communities around them. Jihadi-Salafi self-renunciation and theodicy are mutually constructive; they reinforce the value of self-renunciation in the performance of the memory of tradition.

Theodicy, Asceticism, and Renunciation in Theoretical Comparison

Among the more enduring and influential theses on typologies of human asceticism and renunciation is Max Weber's argument that the directionality of the abnegation of the world should indicate the fundamental characteristics of ascetical activity. Those who are engaged in a continual resistance against the corruptions of daily life, whom Weber labels "active ascetics," believe that such renunciation "is a God-willed *action* of the devout who are God's tools."[33] Active asceticism is work that operates within the material world but in contradistinction to it, in an effort to master it, control it, and tame what is creatural and wicked within it through the workings of a vocation.[34] While this was instrumental to Weber's sociological approach to the Protestant work ethic and its shared affinities with Western capitalism, Weber argued that early Muslim communities rejected such asceticism in favor of flights *from* the world—mysticism.[35] Opposite the active, world-controlling abnegation of the ascetic, Weber identifies the mystic who embraces a state of passive receptivity and becomes "a 'vessel' of the divine."[36] While there certainly were Sufi and proto-Sufi communities that pursued such extinguishing of one's soul within the divine, among other forms of renunciation,[37] Weber's description of the nature of early Islam is limited.

Weber emphasized the mystical practices of Sufi dervishes as a testament to the antiascetical practices of Islam. Muhammad himself, he noted, was opposed specifically to monasticism—as opposed to asceticism—but, Weber argued, had founded his political community upon the ethos of a "national Arabic warrior religion."[38] Although Weber's typological division of mystical and ascetic practice did not explicitly identify the location of

Islamic renunciative practices relative to each, it still remained influential for the discipline of religious studies (*Religionswissenschaft*) emerging at the time. Within Islamic studies, the mystical typology was adopted by many to address the history and development of Sufism. Few, however, addressed in their work any renunciative and ascetical practices of Islam outside of these mystical tendencies, and the historical concept of asceticism remains an understudied and largely unexplored field within Western studies of Islam.[39]

Among the earliest substantial historical treatments in Western scholarship of the Arabic term associated with renunciative and ascetical practices, *zuhd*, came from Ignaz Goldziher, who argued for the gradual emergence of an antiascetical narrative throughout the life of Muhammad. While the early years of the revelation possessed an "ascetic mood," the position of the community toward excessive ascetical practices in daily life—such as extreme feats of abstinence and fasting—were eventually countered with "an abundance of secular considerations."[40] For Goldziher, the ascetical "heterodox" groups such as the Muʿtazila and Sufi communities that considered other communities guilty of substantial materialistic excesses challenged the dominant Sunni narratives and maintained certain renunciative practices.[41] R. A. Nicholson, in his study of renunciative poetry (*zuhdiyyāt*), agrees with Goldziher's argument that ascetical practice was part of a counternarrative emerging against social and material excesses in the early Islamic community.[42] The later mystical practices of Sufism were a result of the earlier liturgical and ethical renunciative practices.[43]

Goldziher argued that the early renunciative practices were influenced by early Christian monastic communities, and this estimation was shared by Louis Massignon and, later, Tor Andrae, Göran Ogén, Ofer Livne-Kafri and then—seemingly definitively—Thomas Sizgorich.[44] Fred Donner argues that the early members of the believing community must have been aware of the rigorous cenobitic and eremitic ascetic practices all around them in the Christian community but gradually mediated those norms through the qurʾanic revelation, culminating in the injunction to "command what is good and forbid what is evil" (*al-amr bi-l-maʾrūf wa-nahyʿan al-munkar*) and, along with it, the demand to strive always in God's path (*jihād fī sabīl Allāh*), a sentiment shared by Fazlur Rahman.[45] Rahman declared ascetical impulses counterproductive to Islamic history and argued that had the renunciative aspects of Sufism caught on more widely, it would have "destroyed the whole fabric of Islam."[46] All of the theses, whether they argue for an internal or an

external origin, maintain that ascetical and renunciative practices are of a limited scope within Islamic belief and practice.

On the matter of the relationship of ritual practice and asceticism, most scholars have not tied such practices to the cultivation of a particular sort of piety but instead interpret them as mere divine obligations. In his early treatment of the term, G. H. Bosquet argues that pious practices (*ʿibādāt*), such as prayer (*ṣalat*), fasting (*ṣawm*), and almsgiving (*zakat*), were the ritualized aspects of Islamic law—mere imperative duties imposed upon an individual without ethical, moral, or cultic implications for human society.[47] Although he does not explicitly mention the concept of *zuhd*, Paul Powers, in his discussions of *fiqh al-ʿibādāt*, writes that any intentionality within a ritual act is merely the fulfillment of one's ritual obligations and does not possess spiritual fulfillment.[48] Not all scholars share this opinion. The connection between ritual practices such as prayer and fasting and ascetical theories within Islamic thought has been brought into focus in the work of Leah Kinberg. Like Josef van Ess, Kinberg argues that terms such as *waraʿ*, *tawakkul*, and *riḍā*, which have previously been classified alongside *zuhd*, are instead parts of the wider phenomenon of *zuhd* in Islamic history.

Zuhd: Renunciation and the Frontiers of Early Islam

In Kinberg's estimation, the concept of *zuhd* carries with it the expectation of a certain position relative to the world, and this is preserved in the statement of *zuhd fī al-dunyā*, or renunciation within the world and daily life. Early Islamic communities understood this type of positionality differently. Kinberg argues that Dhu al-Nun al-Misri (d. 861), Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri (d. 741), and others argued against *zuhd* as a mortification of the flesh and instead presented *zuhd* as a renunciation of the material desires of the soul and a suppression of impure passions.[49] The goal of renunciation is, Kinberg suggests, contentment (*riḍā*), trust in God (*tawakkul*), and the diminishment of hope (*qiṣar al-amal*) in material goods.[50] Melchert argues that for earlier authors, such renunciative piety is the confirmation of the importance of inward dispositions matching the outward ones.[51] Though there were those scholars who argued for renunciation to be predicated upon an active denigration of the flesh, Kinberg argues that others brought *zuhd* into the broader ritualized phenomenon of daily life:

> Most of the definitions cited introduce *zuhd* as a moderate way of life, each definition adding a layer, to complete a picture of human behavior in the moral and religious spheres. . . . *Zuhd* is not something destined for a selected limited group of people, but rather a code of behavior that should be followed by any pious Muslim. Thus the term Muslim becomes equivalent to the term *zāhid*, and practicing Islam is parallel to practicing *zuhd*.[52]

The relationship between personal renunciation and the law is brought into more acute focus in the *Kitāb al-Zuhd* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 241/855), who, along with ʿAbd Allah ibn al-Mubarak (d. 181/797), penned one of the more well-known collections on renunciation. Melchert argues for four predominant themes: (1) the rejection of worldly goods, (2) the praising of particular individuals for their exemplary pious behavior, (3) the importance of daily prayer, and (4) austerity regarding personal needs, such as eating and drinking.[53] All of these behaviors, Kinberg suggests, are evidence that one must cultivate a constant intention in this life toward the world to come and the promise God has made about that world's riches, pleasures, and sustenance.[54]

Such renunciation does not come without an ethical dimension, however. Kinberg argues that *waraʾ*, or careful circumspection, is often brought into direct relation with *zuhd*. Citing Ibn Hanbal, Kinberg writes of the partition of *zuhd* into three types: that of the common people (*ʿawāmm*), which is abandoning the forbidden (*ḥaram*); that of the religious elite (*khawāṣṣ*), which is the abandoning of what is permitted (halal); and that of those who know God (*ʿārifīn*), which is the abandonment of what distracts from God.[55] By this framework, *zuhd* is a social action that warrants a perpetual state of vigilance against the world and material desires. What is essential to this practice, however, is that it is social, and this means, Kinberg concludes, that "if one's source of living is legitimate and relationships are honest, then one fulfills *waraʿ*. And if *waraʿ* is fulfilled then the *wariʿ* [the one engaged in such renunciation] is a *zāhid*."[56] Through this connection, Kinberg establishes that *zuhd* was not attainable by only a specialized and educated mystical elite but was rather accessible to all Muslims, regardless of class or religious knowledge.

Zuhd and Jihad: Ibn Taymiyya and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad

That jihad, like *zuhd*, has a connection to daily life as well is a dimension that has not been lost on either contemporary Jihadi-Salafis or classical Muslim

authors. The connection of *zuhd* to jihad, however, remains a relatively understudied question throughout Islamic history—but for Jihadi-Salafis, such renunciation is essential to self and state formation against a dominant culture. As was observed above, ascetical renunciation has been theorized to possess a relationship to waging jihad in the path of God and the command by God to uphold what is right and prohibit what is wrong (*al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-nahyʿan al-munkar*). In a writing by the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (*Jamʾat al-Jihd bi-Masr*, EIJ) posted on the Minbar, a lengthy passage on the relationship between jihad and *zuhd* is cited from Ibn Taymiyya's *Kitāb al-Siyāsa al-Sharʿiyya* in his *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā*:

> God Almighty said, "And follow that which is revealed unto thee from they Lord. Truly God is Aware of whatsoever you do. And trust [*tawakkal*] in God; God suffices as a Guardian (Q 33:2–3)." Here, God commanded obedience to both the Book and the Wisdom, which was the *Sunna*, that had been revealed and to trust in God. First, He affirmed His saying [from *surat al-fātiḥa*]: "Thee we worship (Q 1:5)," and, second, He affirmed His statement, "and from Thee we seek help (Q 1:5)." Similar to this is His saying, "Worship him, and trust in Him (Q 11:123)" and his saying, "In Him do I trust and unto Him do I turn (Q 42:10)." And this, if it is a command for the totality of the faith [*jamīʿ al-dīn*], it is most assuredly for jihad, because [jihad] necessitates struggling against the disbelievers [*kuffār*] and the hypocrites [*munāfiqīn*] and that is accomplished only with the support of the might of God. Jihad is the pinnacle of action [*sanām al-ʿamal*] and the pinnacle arranges the totality of honored states [*aḥwāl sharīfa*]. Among these states is the pinnacle of love [*sanām al-maḥabba*], as when God said, "God will bring a people whom He loves and who love Him, humble toward the believers, stern toward the disbelievers, striving in the way of God [*yujāhidūna fī sabīl Allāh*], and fearing not the blame of any blamer (Q 5:54)." Among them also are the pinnacle of trust [*tawakkul*] and the pinnacle of patience [*ṣabr*], for which God has said, "And those who emigrate for the sake of God [*hājarū fī Allāh*], after having been wronged, We shall surely settle them in a good place in this world—and the reward of the Hereafter is greater, if they but knew—those who are patient and trust in their Lord (Q 16:41-42)." . . . For those who struggle for Him [*jāhada fī-hi*] guided by the totality of the ways of the Almighty, then this was what the two *imāms*, ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak and Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal said, among others, "When the people differ on something, then look for an

> answer among those fighting on the frontiers [*ahl al-thugur*], for the truth [*ḥaqq*] is with them, because God said, "As for those who strive for Us, We shall surely guide them in Our ways (Q 29:69)." Jihad is also *zuhd* in the life of the world [*zuhd fī al-ḥayāt al-dunyā*] and in the lands of the world [*al-dār al-dunyā*]. It is also the verification of pious sincerity [*ikhlāṣ*]—for the words of one who struggles in the path of God [*jāhada fī sabīl Allāh*], and neither in the path of authority [*riyāsa*], nor in wealth [*māl*], or in the way of pride [*ḥamiyya*]. This [sincerity] occurs only for those who fight [*qātala*] so that all religion [*dīn*] is for God and that the word of God [*kalimat Allāh*] is highest.[57]

Although the passage is presented in the text from the EIJ without additional commentary, the argument from Ibn Taymiyya remains clear. Ibn Taymiyya argues here for a connection of faith and action established on the precedent of those who waged jihad at the earliest margins of Islam, outside of the authority of any political leadership. Struggling in the path of God (*jihād fī sabīl Allāh*), by Ibn Taymiyya's framework, is a representation that one possesses both an inward trust (*tawakkul*) in what God has promised, a love (*maḥabba*) for God, and also patience that one's reward from God may come in the afterlife. By practicing a careful renunciation (*zuhd*) of the world and all it brings in the way of honor, pride, wealth, and political authority and focusing instead on the promise and command of God, Ibn Taymiyya argues, God will provide what God has already promised, an eternal sustenance in the afterlife.

The link between *zuhd* and jihad is made by Ibn Taymiyya upon the precedent of Ibn al-Mubarak and Ibn Hanbal. Ibn al-Mubarak, who preceded Ibn Hanbal and of whom the latter was a great admirer, lived and fought on the *thughūr*—the frontier lands shared by the Byzantine Empire and the then-expanding ʿAbbasid caliphate. Ibn al-Mubarak was a well-known traditionist and renunciant in his own right but was also a warrior who explored both his renunciant and his ascetical sensibilities in his books on jihad and *zuhd* but also in the midst of practicing both along the *thughūr*. Ibn al-Mubarak, in the estimation of Michael Bonner, argued that ascetical piety was expressed best through the physical struggle of an individual warrior, outside the control of any political authority, which was waged against all disbelieving forces and always intended for God and the divine reward promised by God in the afterlife.[58] In his research into Ibn al-Mubarak, Sizgorich confirmed the inclinations of Goldziher, who observed that renunciants such as Ibn

al-Mubarak were not alone in their sensibilities but were perhaps influenced by Christian ascetics with whom they fought and had multiple encounters.[59] The reception of the *Kitāb al-jihād* of Ibn al-Mubarak, which is featured in its entirety on the Minbar al-Tawhid wa-l-Jihad, and the connection between personal renunciation and martyrdom emerge clearly in martyrdom discussions among Jihadi-Salafi jurists. Before considering those, however, I want to dwell on the implications of the connection between personal renunciation—in particular, the renunciation of political authority—and the implications of this renunciation on the Jihadi-Salafi reimagination of their creed in the contemporary period.

As noted above, those such as Ibn al-Mubarak who lived and fought on the Byzantine frontier did so at quite a distance from the established political and legal authorities of their time. Sizgorich has argued that those who observed this renunciative form of jihad and formed narratives to describe it did so in the midst of a cultural borderland, a concept he defined as

> A space in which no one cultural or political force is able to exercise uncontested hegemony and in which one is likely to encounter discursive economies that incorporate (but do not necessarily assimilate) the influences of various cultural traditions and political interests. Borderlands are thus often home to hybrids, entities that combine some or all available influences in distinct, often alarming ways. A hybrid incorporates and embodies the tensions of ungovernable and so irresolvable self-other dichotomies confined in a single entity, be it biological, textual, or economic.[60]

The concept of the borderland presents a unique challenge to theories of asceticism, Islamic or otherwise. Unlike Michel Foucault, for example, who argued *contra* Weber that ascetical practice was a method of subjective ethical formation taking place within this world and relative to a political or social authority, the asceticism of those like Ibn al-Mubarak took place within the world but was framed relative to the divine authority existing outside and beyond it.[61] This seems closer to Valantasis's argument for the instantiation of an alternative subjectivity against the prevailing dominant culture, one meant to reassert and affirm a personal role in the maintenance of the world. The borderland concept advanced by Sizgorich complicates this image of renunciation by arguing that no one immanent authority dominates the ascetical practice of those such as Ibn al-Mubarak.

Like Ibn al-Mubarak, who fought to uphold what he believed to be the command of God, I argue that contemporary Jihadi-Salafis observe an ascetical practice involving a renunciation of the world for the favor of God. Equally, like Ibn al-Mubarak, I argue that these Jihadi-Salafis author their creed and apply it within the context of a borderland, both digital and physical. At times, Jihadi-Salafis uphold the example of Ibn al-Mubarak for their own jihad. Yet Jihadi-Salafis also exploit the contemporary borderland in which they find themselves and from which traditional sources of legal and political authority—at least those they would recognize as authentic—are considered absent or derelict. The renunciant dimensions of the credal positions shared by adherents of Jihadi-Salafism are the product of dual acts of imagination—one relative to their own understanding of the history of Islam and one relative to their contemporary circumstances. At the same time, these dimensions are an ontological affirmation of the Jihadi-Salafi belief in their relationship to life, death, and the divine.

Toward a Jihadi-Salafi Theodicy and Asceticism

Any similarity between the broader ascetical and renunciative tendencies within Islamic traditions, beliefs, and practices, on the one hand, and the renunciative sensibilities at work within Jihadi-Salafi thought, on the other, is complicated by the absence of a physical body. Within these texts, the flesh that can be molded, shaped, broken, and trained to the will of the individual is often absent. Bodies, particularly in the theories of Foucault, are the slates on which ascetical exercises are inscribed. When we say that there is an absence of a body in this discourse, this is not to say that Jihadi-Salafis lack bodies; to be sure, their physicality and mortality are not in question. Rather, this is to observe that the discourse of Jihadi-Salafism—the legal texts, theological statements of faith, and even poetry—is published and presented in an almost entirely disembodied digital context. Whereas the teachings of scholars and authors were once transmitted on a personal level or, at the very least, within the confines of an academic study circle or rigorous institution, contemporary Jihadi-Salafi thought remains to some measure dependent on its consumption by individuals from across the globe receiving the texts in an unmediated format. As was shown at the outset of the project, authors such as al-ʿAwlaki have argued that the future of Jihadi-Salafi thought, particularly in the West, must come through the continued efforts of open-source

jihad. In this model, the texts published that discuss the Jihadi-Salafi creed (*ʿaqīda*) and methodology (*minhāj*) exist both relative to the contexts of their origin—Palestine, Chechnya, Iraq, the United States—and relative to the context of the individual reader downloading the text and relating it to circumstances in his or her location.

The open-source aspect of such a jihad, given that it is both disembodied and decontextualized, is dependent on a double interpretation. At the level of the end user, jihad emerges from the applied interpretation of an individual's or group's reading of Jihadi-Salafi texts. Such an applied interpretation occurs at multiple levels: at an individual level, as in the case of the Tsarnaev brothers alleged have carried out the Boston Marathon bombings, or at a group level, as in the cases of the Gazan Jihadi-Salafi movement, the al-Qaʿida-related movements in Iraq and Syria, and the various Jihadi-Salafi groups in Chechnya. This is perhaps the most difficult context to access given the volatile nature of such "lone wolf" figures. To attempt to trace the reception of each specific text to each group mentioned above would require a substantial commitment of time and resources to interviews and embedded ethnographic analysis that would span multiple contexts and scholars. What is also common to both the Jihadi-Salafi authors and their readers, however, is a set of specific credal principles, the *ʿaqīda*, which the authors purport to follow and which they call their readers to embody through practices of self-renunciation. To address the ascetical sensibilities underlying the disembodied and decontextualized Jihadi-Salafi thought requires careful attention to the nature of the Jihadi-Salafi *ʿaqīda*.

Theodicy and Asceticism in the Jihadi-Salafi Creed

In 1997, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi published a text titled "This, Our Creed" (*Hādhihi ʿaqīdatunā*).[62] Nearly two decades later, an unknown author writing for Maktabat al-Himma (Zeal Library) of ISIS published a pamphlet with a similar title: "This Is Our Creed and This Is Our Methodology" (*Hādhihi ʿaqīdatunā wa-hādhā minhajunā*).[63] The two documents shared several similar credal principles: belief in the angels (*malāʾika*), in the veracity of the Qurʾan, prior messengers and prophets, and resurrection and the last day. They also shared the five essential principles for creed and methodology: *tawḥīd, ḥākimiyya, al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ*, *takfīr*, and finally, jihad in the path of God. The affirmation of God and God's sovereignty, if taken as an

explanatory framework for the existence of suffering and evil in the world—theodicy—allows us to explore the renunciative aspects of the application of them as a *minhāj*—necessitating loyalty and disavowal, the proclamation of disbelief, and finally, jihad.

The Victorious Community in Service of God: *Millat Ibrāhīm*

God is the one to whom all Jihadi-Salafis turn in subjection, and it is upon their assertion of the unity of God (*tawḥīd*) that Jihadi-Salafis construct their understanding of faith (*imān*) and disbelief (*kufr*). With belief and disbelief established, Jihadi-Salafis are able to work toward the application of their methodology by which they derive legal rulings from the Qurʾan and Sunna for their legitimation of jihad against others. To assert one's belief in the unity of God, however, Jihadi-Salafi authors such as Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi suggest that one must do more than simply express such belief verbally. For al-Maqdisi, "faith [*īmān*] is an action [*ʿamal*], a declaration [*qawl*], an intention [*niyya*]—it is conviction in the heart [*iʿtiqād bi-l-janān*], affirmation with the tongue [*iqrār bi-l-lisān*], and an action of the limbs [*ʿamal bi-l-jawāriḥ*]."[64]

Faith, within this framework, is a complex synthesis of varying internal mental states and external physical motions that may fluctuate based on the suitability of one's actions to God's divine law and their symmetry with the tradition of the Salaf. To assist with unpacking the relationship between the internal and the external, I turn to Toshihiko Izutsu, who, in his own observations on faith and belief in Islamic history, observes four separate semantic aspects of belief: (1) the subject of belief, (2) the object of belief, (3) the act of belief itself, and (4) the external manifestation of that belief.[65] By placing the Jihadi-Salafi credal position alongside these categories, it becomes possible to understand the ideal subjectivity that Jihadi-Salafi authors believe is necessary for realizing a full relationship to God and God's divine plan.

To determine the subject of belief, it is necessary to ask the question, who is, or who is not, the true believer? For Jihadi-Salafis, a true believer is a member of what is often referred to as the "victorious community" (*al-ṭāʾifa al-manṣūra*).[66] The victorious community, in the estimation of al-Maqdisi, is what resembles the helpers (*anṣār*) who assisted Muhammad upon his arrival in Medina and who have continued to assist the religion (*dīn*) at every opportunity. The community, he writes, "is one that struggles, fights, and that

aspires to the victory of the religion of God in all possible ways" (*wa-hiyya ṭāʾifa mujāhida muqātila tusaʾā li-nuṣrat dīn Allāh min kul wujūh al-nuṣra*).[67] For al-Maqdisi and the Jihadi-Salafis, the member of the victorious sect is one who, following the guidance of Muhammad, wages jihad, violent or otherwise, in order to uphold the right and true faith.

To be a member of the victorious sect is to be located within a particular historical narrative in which one's existence is bracketed by the prophetic revelation and the eschatological events at the end of history. This establishes a temporal relation but not a spiritual one. The victorious sect will persist within history as carrying out God's work, but the narrations say little about the nature of that work or the principles of the faith of those carrying forth the mantle of such a sect. To describe the spiritual relationship of his community to God, al-Maqdisi turns to Qurʾan 60:4:

> You have a sound model in Ibrahim and those with him when they said to their people, "We disavow you and what you worship apart from God [*innā buraʾāʾū minkum wa-mimmā taʿbudūna min dūn Allāh*]. We disbelieve in you [*kafarnā bi-kum*], and enmity and hatred [*al-ʿadāwa wa-l-baghḍāʾ*] has arisen between us and you and it will persist until you believe in God alone [*ḥatā tuʾminū bi-llāh waḥdahu*].

This verse identifies the basis of what al-Maqdisi identifies as the *millat Ibrāhīm*, or religious community of Ibrahim, first discussed by him in a 1984 text of the same name.[68] Such a community, in the reading of al-Maqdisi, focused on the assertion of the divine unity (*tawḥīd*) in all manners of life and worship—the object of belief as outlined by Izutsu above—but was also given a method by which upright faith is maintained: the doctrine of *al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ*, or, as it may be generally translated, "loyalty and disavowal"—a translation that is not without some debate—or more broadly translated as "loyalty to that which God has revealed and the disavowal of that which God has forbidden."[69] Al-Maqdisi refers to a portion of this principle in the passage above. Those following Ibrahim are those who disavow all beliefs and practices that are apart from God and, eventually, come to detest them. Al-Maqdisi identifies the core characteristics of the contemporary *millat Ibrāhīm* as follows: "Sincere worship of God alone in every meaning that the word 'worship' encompasses and the disavowal of polytheism and its people" (*ikhlāṣ al-ʿibāda li-llah waḥdahu bi-kull mā taḥwīḥī kalmiat al-ʿibāda min maʿānin wa-l-barāʾa min al-shirk wa-ahlihi*).[70]

The position seems quite stark. There is a double renunciation at work, in the realm of belief and in that of action. Those following the community of Ibrahim accept *surat al-Ikhlāṣ* as the proof (*dalīl*) of their belief (*iʿtiqād*): "Say, 'He is God, One. God the eternal. Neither begetting nor begotten, nor has he an equal.'" As a proof for their action (*ʿamal*), al-Maqdisi cites *surat al-kāfirūn*: "Say, 'O disbelievers [*kāfirūn*]. I do not worship what you worship. You do not worship what I worship. I will never worship what you worship, nor will you worship what I worship. To you your religion [*dīn*], and to me my religion." Proper belief, on the basis of the first verse, is the type of sincere belief in *tawḥīd* established by al-Maqdisi above. To place one's belief in any being, entity, matter, or concept is to create a being equal to God and be guilty of associating partners to God (*shirk*). Equally, to undertake any act of worship that does not have God at its center—or that is corrupted with the beliefs and practices of another community, such as those of the Christians or the Jews—is to commit an act of disbelief (*kufr*). Affirming God's oneness is a form of performative worship mean to avoid the suffering and sin of disbelief.

Seeking God's Unity: *Tawḥīd* in Faith and Politics

In his pamphlet, al-Maqdisi describes *tawḥīd*, affirming:

> We say regarding the assertion of the unity of God [*tawḥīd Allāh*] that God is one [*wāḥid*], having no partner [*lā shārīk la-hu*] in his lordship [*rubūbiyyatihi*], in his divinity [*ulūhiyyatihi*], or in his names and attributes [*ismāʾihi wa-ṣifātihi*].
>
> We believe in the angels of God [*malāʾikat Allāh*], that they are the honored servants of God, who do not precede him in speech, who tremble in fear of him, and who praise him night and day without ceasing.[71]

In his statement on *tawḥīd*, al-Maqdisi notes that it has three types: *tawḥīd al-rubūbiyya, tawḥīd al-ulūhiyya*, and *tawḥīd al-asmāʾ wa-l-ṣifāt*, or the unity of God's absolute lordship, the unity of God's divinity, and the unity of God's names and attributes. The profession of God's unique singularity in all three dimensions is realized, he writes, within one's interior as one's objective (*qaṣd*) and the focus of one's will (*irāda*).[72] God, in this framework, must be the end toward which all of one's acts are aimed, but God is also the ground of

one's existence, because, as al-Maqdisi noted in the creed above, God is also the creator of the possibility of all human action in the world. The tripartite assertion of the unity of God encompasses both God as the object toward which one must focus one's belief and the ground from which one obtains one's sense of self in the world.

Al-Maqdisi is not alone in his understanding of this tripartite division of *tawḥīd*. The subdivision of *tawḥīd* into categories was advanced by Qutb, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab, and Ibn Taymiyya, all of whom are considered by al-Maqdisi to be intellectual foundations of his credal positions. Although they remain separate and often critical of one another, Jihadi-Salafism and contemporary scholars affiliated with the Saudi state share a common intellectual progenitor in Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab, whom al-Maqdisi considered one of his principal influences. In the estimation of Ahmad Dallal, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab was not concerned with the relationship of social affairs to economic or political affairs. For Dallal, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab considered his adversaries "Muslims who held wrong beliefs about God, not tyrants who oppress Muslims."[73] To correct these beliefs, Muslims were expected to go beyond mere faith (*īmān*) as a verbal assertion, by possessing both knowledge (*ʿilm*) and affirmation (*taṣdīq*) of God's sovereignty.[74] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab considered this fulfilled faith to be a work emerging out of a love for those following God and a hatred for those who fail to do so.[75] *Tawḥīd*, therefore, as the active assertion of one's belief in the all-encompassing superiority of God, became the ground of Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab's system for identifying Muslims and non-Muslims.

Central to Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab's emphasis on the divinity of God was his belief that it was an observable condition in the life of a believer. Outward action, more so than an inward subjective belief, was, for Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab, the means by which an individual believer was to be assessed for manifesting the appropriate submission to the will of God. The repeated failure to understand the totality of this unity was the central failure of Muslims of his time and was a direct cause of the gradual slip by his contemporaries into the practices of the pre-Islamic *jāhiliyya* period that he believed the Qurʾan and Sunna forbade. For the al-Saud, who allied themselves with Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab toward the close of the eighteenth century, the emphasis on belief and practice provided a clear means of identifying those outside of the emerging political community. The relative political quietism of Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab permitted a division of powers; the Saudi family was granted control of the political affairs of the Najd, while Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab and his interlocutors were granted nominal control of critiquing and reforming

what they deemed an encroachment of tradition (*taqlīd*) on the Islam of Muhammad and the companions. The *muwāḥḥidūn*, those who would eventually be labeled Wahhabi, arose alongside the Saudi state as those who guided and shaped the social practice and political order.

Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab was preceded in this sensibility by Ibn Taymiyya. Although it is unclear if he originated the divisions or if they were just common matters of debate within his time, Ibn Taymiyya uses both *tawḥīd al-rubūbiyya* and *tawḥīd al-ulūhiyya* as descriptions of the types of *tawḥīd* necessary for the completion of the belief in God. The critique leveled by Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab against those he considered to be guilty of associating partners to God (*shirk*), and therefore guilty of disbelief (*kufr*), in his time was similar to the critique leveled by Ibn Taymiyya against the *mutakallimūn*, those engaged in disputations on *kalām*. According to Ibn Taymiyya, while the *mutakallimūn* established a tripartite structure of *tawḥīd*—that God was one in essence, without partners, and one in actions—such an appeal still failed to account for "the elements set forth by the Qurʾan and the Sunna, among which the most important is the statement that God alone deserves man's worship."[76] The emphasis on the importance of *tawḥīd al-ulūhiyya* was, for Ibn Taymiyya, a thoughtful attempt to ensure that any discourse on the nature and essence of God be derived from the revealed sources of the Qurʾan and Sunna. Without a firm grounding in these sources, Ibn Taymiyya contended that theological disputations would be reduced to the natural theology of non-Muslims and would perpetuate an improper relationship between reason and revelation within Islamic thought.[77]

Though Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab and Ibn Taymiyya identified the concept of *tawḥīd* as a central element in the completion of Islamic belief, they differed on the specific role played by it in defining such belief. *Tawḥīd* for Ibn Taymiyya was a critical means of protecting the integrity of revelation (*naql*) against an encroachment by reason (*ʿaql*). For Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab, the protection of revelation was important, but such protection was guaranteed by maintaining appropriate beliefs and practices—all of which were predicated on upholding an essential dependence on God's indivisible unity. The critique of rationalism leveled by Ibn Taymiyya and the critique of innovative practices leveled by Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab are, in some sense, both present within the work of Qutb, who, like Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab, viewed himself as combating the resurgence of what he termed the ignorant (*jāhiliyya*) thought in contemporary Muslim society. While *tawḥīd* was of critical importance to Qutb's thought, it was reflected in human society as the principle

of *ḥākimiyya*, which may be translated with some reservation as "sovereignty." The implementation of Islamic law in society was, for Qutb, a logical conclusion following the appropriate realization of God's oneness and sovereignty over all of society. In this assumption, Qutb appears to borrow from Muhammad ʿAbduh and other Islamic reformers before him—and he also seems to adopt from them the sense that *tawḥīd* is encompassed by both *ulūhiyya* and *ʿubūdiyya*.[78]

Like Qutb, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab, and Ibn Taymiyya, Jihadi-Salafis understand *tawḥīd* as possessing the multiple dimensions of lordship, divinity, and a unity of names and attributes. Equally, like their predecessors, the Jihadi-Salafis acknowledge that it is the latter two categories—divinity and the unity of names and attributes—that advance Islam beyond other religious and religious communities. While other societies may recognize the omnipotence and omniscience of a singular deity, it is within Islam, Jihadi-Salafis suggest, that the full completion of such a sensibility is realized through the unity of inward belief and its expression through verbal confession and outward acts of worship. In a text located on the Minbar inside the folder of texts discussing *tawḥīd al-ulūhiyya*, penned by ʿAli bin Khudayr al-Khudayr, a student of Hamud bin ʿUqla al-Shuʿaybi, who himself was a colleague of al-Maqdisi, it is noted that the assertion of God's divinity "is the *tawḥīd* of God through the actions of those serving him—[actions] such as supplication [*dūʿāʾ*], hope for what has been promised [*rajāʾ*], fear of God's punishment [*khawf*], anxiety [*khashiyya*], seeking God's help [*istiʿāna*], seeking God's protection [*istiʿādha*], love [*maḥabba*], authority [*ināba*], vowing to God [*nadhr*], sacrifice [*dhibḥ*], desire [*raghba*], reverence [*rahba*], humility [*khushūʿ*], self-effacement [*tadhallul*], and glorifying God [*taʿẓīm*]."[79] Al-Maqdisi affirms several of these within his credal statement as well, noting that the assertion of God's unity in all acts of belief and worship is a product of God's command over all of creation and God's power to guide all of creation.[80] All of these, al-Khudayr goes on to suggest, are but a small element of the entirety of what the unity of God's divinity encompasses in the realm of human pious activity.

To know and understand the unity of God's names and attributes is to identify with a measure of certainty the nature of the deity to which one has devoted one's faithful piety, love, and, if necessary, fear. Hamid bin ʿAbd Allah al-ʿAli, in a letter written in response to a question received from a British Muslim that is located under the subheading "Tawḥīd al-asmāʾ wa-l-ṣifāt" on

the Minbar, identified five truths necessary for affirming the attributes (*ṣifāt*) of God:

1. God Almighty commands our belief in what he revealed [*anzalahu*] in his book, the Qurʾan, and in what he revealed [*awḥā*] to his Prophet in the Sunna.
2. It is necessary to believe that the attributes of God Almighty appear in the Qurʾan and Sunna without corruption or obstruction in their meaning . . . and that there is no resemblance between them and the characteristics of created things [*makhlūq*].
3. God Almighty is described by attributes of absolute perfection . . . believing in any flaws in his attributes is an action of the Jews and Christians as a result of their corruptions.
4. We, through our faith [*imāninā*], affirm all of the attributes of God Almighty appearing in the Qurʾan and Sunna as true, but we do not know how they are possible [*ghayr anna-nā najhalu kafiyyatahā*], because our limited minds are helpless to comprehend that.
5. The divine revelation [*al-waḥy al-ilahī*] is not subsumed to mere rational processes . . . [or] to a sound mind that understands the clear evidence and sound proofs [of revelation]. . . . Because in the divine revelation are words that are hidden, and humanity remains always perplexed by what is hidden from its reason.[81]

In his credal statement, al-Maqdisi speaks similarly of the role human rationality plays in comprehending the divine. The assertion of the divine unity of God—including God's names and attributes—must not negate any of those descriptions that God grants himself in the Qurʾan and Sunna. To comprehend the divine must be a result not of human rationality but of the careful cultivation of pious belief and mindful worship.

Acting upon or Postponing God's Judgment: *Irjāʾ*

The final point made above by Khudayr possesses an almost mystical sensibility regarding the divine attributes. Although it is tempting to suggest that Khudayr is involved in a sort of apophatic renunciation of the intelligibility of the divine, to do so would be to mistake the relationship of reason to revelation within the Jihadi-Salafi *ʿaqīda* and would fail to address the importance

of that relationship to how Jihadi-Salafis evaluate the status of Muslims who exist in a state of grave sin. Though Ibn Taymiyya was concerned with the relationship of reason to revelation, he also utilized theological preferences for social and political classifications.

In a similar fashion, Jihadi-Salafis are concerned with how *tawḥīd* may be used as an evaluative criterion for social and political deviancies. By eliminating the latter, it becomes possible to restore God's divine order. To further differentiate themselves from other Muslim communities, Jihadi-Salafis draw upon prior theological and theopolitical debates on nature of the divine unity and humanity's relationship to it. To summarize, for instance, al-Maqdisi's assertion in his *ʿaqīda* that revelation is the source for all human comprehension of the divine attributes, al-Maqdisi adds that he and his followers "disavow [*nabraʿu*] the denial of divine attributes of God asserted by the Jahmiyya."[82] This is another performance of the memory of tradition.

Although little direct source material remains from Jahm bin Safwan (d. 746) and those preceding and following him in the ʿUmayyad period, the Jahmiyya were identified and labeled as adversaries by Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyya, and those following their methods of interpretation. The citation of the group by the Jihadi-Salafis is intentional and is used as part of their broader self-differentiation from what they see as the modern resurgence of Murjiʾi and Khariji communities of thought—the classifiers for "postponers" and "seceders" who have long been used as subjects for debate and differentiation by various theological, political, and legal communities throughout Islamic history.

The Jahmiyya were described by their critics as following a theology of uniqueness (*tanzīh*) that elevated the domain of the divine beyond any possible human comprehension. God was therefore stripped of all knowable or ascertainable attributes, and belief was reduced to a matter of the heart (*qalb*). This has two profound implications for human faith and the role of revelation. In his *Majmūʿ al-fatāwā*, Ibn Taymiyya describes the Jahmiyya from an adversarial perspective as being those who feel that knowledge (*ʿilm*) and faith (*īmān*) exist equally within the heart—belief in God and God's Messenger, therefore, is equivalent to merely being aware of them.[83] No outward action—sinful or otherwise—could be considered related to the interior status of one's belief in God. As Ibn Taymiyya formulates it, the error of Bin Safwan and those following him was "thinking [*ẓannū*] that faith [*īmān*] was merely the assent of the heart [*taṣdīq al-qalb*] and its knowledge *ʿilm*]."[84] These acts of the heart (*afʿāl al-qalb*), in the estimation of the Jahmiyya, are

evidence of the inward beliefs of an individual. If one truly has love (*ḥabb*) for God and God's Messenger, then one will be unable to outwardly speak ill of or go against the will of God.[85] This had substantial implications for the responsibility of humans for their actions, either good or sinful.[86]

Though he felt that those articulating Jahmiyya positions had taken one of the more extreme Murjiʾi positions of his time, Ibn Taymiyya considered the understanding of faith (*īmān*) possessed by the Jahmiyya to be characteristic of that of the majority of his contemporaries within Ashʿari and Maturidi circles.[87] Among the essential qualities of faith, Ibn Taymiyya suggested, was the possibility that it might increase and decrease (*yazīdu wa-yanquṣu*) and that as a composite entity, the increase or decrease of faith did not change its essential qualities—in much the same way that a river, town, or mosque might gain or lose parts but still remain the same entity.[88] The idea that faith itself might fluctuate implies that faith might be stronger in some than it is in others, requiring intentional and mindful physical action to strengthen the heart and assist its growth. This concept was essential for Ibn Taymiyya's later evaluation of the permissibility of struggle or resistance against the Mongols, who, though they claimed to have accepted Islam, appeared to follow or enforce few, if any, of the principles of Islamic legal theory or positive law.

The anti-Jahmiyya and anti-Murjiʾi position taken by Ibn Taymiyya emerged against what is often considered the classical Murjiʾi position, a tendency that was often identified with Abu Hanifa and the later followers of the school or jurisprudence bearing his name. The question of belief and unbelief itself, however, emerged in the midst of the second-century AH/eighth-century CE conflicts among ʿAli, ʿUthman, Ṭalha, and al-Zubayr—and the later conflicts among ʿAli, the Kufan Khariji revolt, and the Murjiʾi reaction to the Khariji critique of both ʿAli and Muʿawiya. The Murjiʾi position, as their name suggests, was on the matter of *irjāʾ*, or the postponement of judgment by the community on the status of the grave sinner pending the decision of God on the status of such an individual in the hereafter.

One of the central qurʾanic discussions to emerge out of the complications posed by *irjāʾ* and the ongoing debate on the status of believers and disbelievers was the exegesis of Qurʾan 5:44: "Whoever does not govern by what God has revealed, they are those who have disbelieved [*al-kāfirūn*]." For the Murjiʾi, the verses following this text—which referred to rulers governing by laws other than the laws of God as "unjust" (*ẓālim*) or "iniquitous" (*fāsiq*)—were read as evidence that unbelief (*kufr*) is not necessarily evidence

of a complete departure from God and all that God has revealed through Muhammad.[89]

Against this interpretation stood the Kharijiyya, those who departed from ʿAli and Muʿawiya at the Battle of Siffin, famously proclaiming that in the matter of arbitration, there was no law save God's (*lā ḥukm illā bi-llāh*). The Khariji communities therefore understood that the failure of a ruler to uphold God's law and even for a ruler to commit a single sin, would be sufficient evidence of disbelief in God and God's Messenger and would necessitate the sometimes violent removal of the unjust leadership. Pronouncing *takfīr*, the assertion of one's disbelief in God's revelation of Islam, the Kharijiyya stood in complete opposition to the relative political and religious quietism of the Murjiʾa and their interlocutors, the Jahmiyya.

The usage of "Khariji" and "Murjiʾi" in the contemporary period, either by Jihadi-Salafi authors or by their interlocutors in reference to Jihadi-Salafism, emerges from both the internal debates among Jihadi-Salafis and from external critiques leveled against them. Nelly Lahoud, in her exhaustive study of the usage of "Khariji" as a repeated critique of Jihadism, notes that the use of the term as a descriptor for Jihadis is meant to evoke broader sensibilities of them as extremists resorting to thoughtless and extraordinary violence as the instrument by which they advance their religious and political beliefs.[90] Both, she notes, will place an emphasis on political sovereignty (*ḥākimiyya*) residing with God alone, and both renounce and seek to be separate from what they deem to be corrupt Islamic practices, and it is such emphases, she says, that are more compelling points of comparison because they reveal how both groups have responded to the question, "What are the believers' obligations to God when they perceive that their own leaders and their fellow Muslims are violating God's Law?"[91]

To label Jihadi-Salafis as Kharijis or neo-Kharijis, however, is to neglect the specific historical and social circumstances to which each responded, as well as the theological and legal methods formed to respond to those conditions. Joas Wagemakers, in a study of the term in the Saudi context, argues that the usage of both terms "Khariji" and "Murjiʾi" are successful because of the superficial similarities shared between the movement being labeled and its historical counterpart and because of their utility to those Muslim jurists who would rather condemn Jihadi-Salafis without declaring them disbelievers (*kāfirūn*) or apostates (*mushrikūn*).[92] In the latter instance, the utility of the label is such that it carries enough of a negative stigma to chastise the errors

committed by Jihadi-Salafis, but it is not extreme enough to necessitate a call for their removal from the community of the faithful altogether.

Al-Maqdisi imagines the debate on the postponement of judgment to have both theological (*kalām*) and juridical (*fiqh*) dimensions. The theological debates on Murjiʾa, he suggests, are typified by the debates of the Jahmiyya, who suggested that faith (*imān*) is established and brought to full completion by knowledge within the heart.[93] Disbelief (*kufr*) is mere ignorance (*jahl*) of the divine revelation and God's Messenger. For the Jahmiyya, to know both is, al-Maqdisi claims, to believe in both.[94] The juridical Murjiʾa, he states, are those who add to the position of the Jahmiyya the necessity of verbal confirmation (*qawl al-lisān*) but continue to leave works (*aʿamāl*) absent.[95] The failure of the "Murjiʾa of our time" (*murjiʾa aṣrinā*), as he puts it, is to neglect the necessity of actions for establishing and sustaining sound faith. This is not just a petty theological squabble. For al-Maqdisi, the failure to enact the tenets of faith is reflected in the failure of governments to act to uphold the Shariʿa itself, and on the basis of his reading of Qurʾan 5:44, this means that the government itself may have committed an act of disbelief (*kufr*) necessitating ceasing loyalty (*al-walāʾ*) and disavowing (*barāʾ*) the tyrant.

Remaining Loyal to the Community, Disavowing the Unfaithful, and Struggle in God's Cause

The principle of *al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ* is also not a unique creation of al-Maqdisi but instead has a long history throughout Islamic theological and legal discussions. Many of the earliest manifestations of the term appeared in the discourse of several pre-Islamic Arab communities and in the Khariji and proto-Shiʿi communities. It is the former that has led many, such as Lahoud, to place the Jihadi-Salafi community in comparison with the Kharijites.[96] Beyond the similar characteristics, however, what makes the Khariji position relevant to Jihadi-Salafism is the development by the Ibadi and ʿAlid communities of *al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ* into an instrument of legal reasoning. The idea of association (*walāya*) and dissociation (*barāʾa*) was a principle by which, in the estimation of Ersilia Francesca, the Ibadis affirmed "solidarity towards their co-religionists and the violent hostility towards non-Ibāḍīs or the reprobate Ibāḍīs."[97] As the Ibadi legal school emerged, the principle was incorporated into its legal texts and was used as a means for ensuring social order and establishing social boundaries; often individuals who were

removed from the community on the basis of it were allowed to return after a demonstrable rectification of the behavior that led to their removal.[98]

Within the broader Sunni tradition, the usage of *al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ* has been related to matters of belief and ritual practice (*ʿibādāt*), not social functions. Ibn Taymiyya is highly critical of those Muslims of his time who violate the prohibition established in Qurʾan 5:51 against being loyal (*muwala*) to Jews and Christians and taking them as friends.[99] Thomas Hegghammer argues that although he does not use the expression specifically, Ibn Taymiyya's rejection of Muslims adopting or observing Jewish and Christian practices is evidence of his familiarity with the concept.[100] Ibn Taymiyya, however, viewed such disavowal as the behavior of pious Muslims only. Hegghammer contends that it was the Wahhabis who developed the concept further as a tool not just against innovation (*bidʿa*) in religious belief and practice but also a means of purging those guilty of disbelief (*kufr*). As examples, Hegghammer provides both Sulayman ibn ʿAbd Allah Al al-Shaykh, a descendant of Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab, and Hamd bin ʿAli ibn ʿAtiq (d. 1883), a Hanbali who develops Sulayman's ideas on the matter even further. For Sulayman, *al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ* is a religious test for all believing Muslims that is predicated on love in God (*ḥubb fī-llāh*) and hatred in God (*baghḍāʾ fī-llāh*), while for ʿAbdullah ibn ʿAtiq, the failure to uphold *tawḥīd* becomes an observable criterion for the declaration of disbelief (*takfīr*). Both, Hegghammer concludes, expose early trends that were developed further in the fifteenth/twentieth century, one taken up by scholars of the Saudi state and one taken up by al-Maqdisi, Juhayman al-ʿUtaybi (1936–1980), and others.[101]

For movements such as the Gazan Shariʿa Council mentioned at the outset of this chapter, the position of *al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ* is a theological, ontological, and political position. Like al-Maqdisi, the council affirms that *al-walāʾ* is predicated on an assertion of the divine unity. Writing in the "Tuḥfat," the council states that "our relationship with people is both loyalty [*al-walāʾ*] and disavowal [*barāʾ*]: loyalty to Islām, faith [*īmān*], and righteousness [*iḥsān*]; and disavowal from disbelief [*kufr*], iniquity [*fusūq*], and insolence [*ʿiṣyān*]."[102] More broadly, *al-walāʾ* is love (*maḥabba*) for God that is manifested in loyalty for the community (*jamāʿa*) of believing Muslims, the people following the Sunna, and the victorious sect.[103] Disavowal is reserved by the council for disbelievers (*kuffār*) and polytheists (*mushrikīn*), any actions of those considered guilty of innovation and dissension (*ʿamal ahl al-bidʿa wa-l-furqa*), and those acts that disobey the Sunna and the

community.[104] To complete the act of loyalty, one must not only affirm through one's belief that God's word is highest, but one must also, if necessary, physically separate oneself and disavow the actions considered contrary to the divine revelation and law. The principle of *al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ* is what Izutsu would consider an external manifestation of faith; it is those acts, both internal and external, that confirm to the true believer (the member of the victorious sect and *millat Ibrāhīm*) what it is to believe and affirm the unity of God (*tawḥīd*).

The principles of *tawḥīd* and *al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ* form the renunciative basis of the broader Jihadi-Salafi creed and establish both what one must believe and how one must embody and live that belief. As elements of the tradition of the *millat Ibrāhīm*, they require one to assume postures toward individuals and governments that involve ongoing negotiations of self-identity relative to tradition. While it may seem that al-Maqdisi is creating a tenuous analogy between the expectations of an individual believer and a government, al-Maqdisi in reality views governments as a totality of believers and disbelievers. As such, for al-Maqdisi, the assertion of the oneness of God necessitates the assertion of this oneness throughout all aspects of society including governance (*ḥukm*) and legislation (*tashrīʿ*).[105] If either governments or the individuals constituting them enact legislation or, in the case of individuals, perform acts that are contrary to the Shariʿa, then, on the basis of those acts of disbelief (*kufr*) or polytheism (*shirk*), such individuals must be either fought or disavowed.

The necessity of *tawḥīd,* however, is incumbent upon every believer in every place and time. Failure to uphold God's law as revealed in the Qurʾan and Sunna necessitates for al-Maqdisi the pronouncement of disbelief (*takfīr*) on those who have violated the law. Al-Maqdisi labels those guilty of such disbelief to have followed into the error of the worship of false idols (*ṭawāghīt*)—a term al-Maqdisi borrows from the Qurʾan and which he uses to criticize contemporary governments that uphold democratic, socialistic, communist, or monarchical governments not established upon Islamic law. All systems other than the divine law are for al-Maqdisi man-made laws (*al-qawānīn al-waḍʿiyya*) that represent "the most repugnant idols in today's world" (*ashnaʿ ṭawāghīt al-ʿaṣr fī baladinā hādhā*).[106] In the "Kashf," his criticism of the Kuwaiti government, al-Maqdisi compares the usage of man-made, un-Islamic laws to the *yāsiq* of the Mongols, of whom Ibn Taymiyya was sharply critical in his time.[107]

Although he considers the usage of such man-made laws evidence that contemporary Muslims and their governments have become corrupted with the Murjiʾi divorce of faith and action, al-Maqdisi does not consider the implementation of man-made laws, constitutions, and the popular sovereignty of democracies to be immediate grounds for *takfīr*. In a lengthy treatise he penned titled "Al-Risala al-Thalathiniyya fi tahdhir min al-Ghulu fi Takfir" ("The Thirtieth Treatise Cautioning against Extremism in Takfīr"), al-Maqdisi outlines, through more than four hundred pages of meticulous exegesis of the Qur'an, hadith, *tafsīr*, and texts and scholars commenting on the *uṣūl al-fiqh*, a substantial set of criteria necessary for the pronouncement of disbelief upon another Muslim who falls into error in belief, speech, or action. An actor, for example, may fall into error due to an unintended series of unfortunate mistakes, the debilitating effects of a mental illness, or a faulty interpretation of text. Equally, an individual might have been coerced into the sinful behavior by a coercive hegemony or seductive political ideology.[108]

Consider the example of Hamas. In the discussion of al-Maqdisi and Abu al-Walid on the Gazan question mentioned at the outset of this chapter, we noted the critique leveled by both against the democratically elected Gazan government. By entering into a democratic system of governance, Hamas, it was suggested, had postponed judgment on non-Islamic systems of governance and social organization. Right after the publication of the "Tuḥfat," however, al-Maqdisi answered Abu al-Walid's effort by publishing two texts: one on June 24, 2009, titled "Nahnu wa Hamas lasna ʿala minhajin wahidin wa hum min yuʿallinu dhalika" ("We and Hamas Do Not Follow a Single Path and They Are the Ones Who Have Announced This"), and another in "response" to a set of critiques published by Hamas, titled "Al-Radd al-Amthal ʿalā Muftī Ḥamās al-Asṭal" ("The Exemplary Response to al-Astal, the Mufti of Hamas").[109] Both mounted a lengthy critique of the governance of Hamas.

Throughout his critiques, al-Maqdisi was careful to differentiate between the idea of Hamas as a movement (*ḥaraka*) and a government (*ḥukūma*). According to al-Maqdisi, Hamas is an illegitimate government for five reasons: "(1) Hamas established and follows a democratic system [*al-minhaj al-dīmūqrāṭī*]; (2) Hamas is responsible for governing by laws and statutes [*qawānīn wa al-dasātīr*] which it manufactured; (3) Hamas intends neither to arbitrate by the Islamic Shariʿa nor to establish an Islamic state [*dawla islāmīyya*]; (4) Hamas is a nationalist enterprise which is of the type of projects of the Iraqi Islamic Party and the Somali Courts—it is not a distinctly Islamic enterprise [*mashrūʿan islāmīyyan mutamayyizan*]; it lessens,

and perhaps even suppresses, the creed of *al-walāʾ wa al-barāʾ* [disavowal and loyalty]; and (5) Hamas aspires to achieve a single state (i.e., the unity of two states) but not the unity of those to whom the message of Muhammad was sent (i.e., the *umma*)."[110] These are clear declarations of the causes of the suffering of Gazans and the failure of their elected government.

The battle with Hamas, al-Maqdisi argues, is a defensive struggle (*jihād dafʿī*) that was not started by the Jihadi-Salafi movement in Palestine. Neither, he continues, does the movement desire the destruction of Hamas itself. Instead, the Jihadi-Salafis seek a fundamental change in the political goals of the organization. In particular, they called for Hamas to aver its intention (*nīyya*) to establish an Islamic government that rules on the bases of the Shariʿa. The failure of Hamas to do so, he concludes, causes Hamas to have committed an act of postponing judgment against disbelievers and to risk falling victim to the same flaws of other movements in the region.

Al-Maqdisi tends to be reserved in his calls for jihad, a position that, as will be shown in chapter 4, brought him into considerable controversy following the actions of his former colleague, Abu Musʿab al-Zarqawi, but he does consider it among the obligations (*farāʾiḍ*) that all Muslims may be called upon to fulfill during their lives. That all Muslim countries, in the estimation of al-Maqdisi, have implemented elements of non-Islamic laws and therefore fallen into varying states of disbelief created a state of emergency. As a result, struggle is now, for al-Maqdisi, an individual obligation (*farḍ al-ʿayn*), wherein much of the classical jurisprudence established by the four Sunni *madhāhib* has been displaced due to the state of emergency.[111] While he is careful to limit the pronouncement of *takfīr* to those involved with creating and sustaining man-made laws within Islamic states, al-Maqdisi considers jihad to be an individual obligation for Muslims across the globe. The simple act of postponing judgment on non-Muslims and their systems of government becomes, for al-Maqdisi, a very real criterion establishing the possibility of jihad.

Conclusion: Toward Struggle and Martyrdom in God's Cause

Jihadi-Salafis insist that it is only through struggle that a domain for God's revealed law is secured in this world. Like their understanding of *tawḥīd*, the Jihadi-Salafi understanding of jihad emerges from their appropriation

of examples and precedents drawn from the various manifestations of the concept throughout Islamic history. In the contemporary period, jihad has become synonymous with acts of violence, terror, and political resistance, and as a result of these acts, it is often suggested that the rationale underlying them can be identified from either the earliest Islamic communities or the Qurʾan and Sunna.

From 1948 to the present, jihad has continued to be used by some as an instrument of statecraft—as exemplified by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the former regime of Saddam Hussein (1937–2006)—but it has also been framed as a counternarrative against these states and others.[112] As was noted in the introduction, the theories of Sayyid Imam al-Sharif, Muhammad ʿAbd al-Salam al-Faraj, and ʿAbd Allah ʿAzzam were instrumental to the gradual emergence of Jihadi-Salafism in the late twentieth century. In the contemporary period, the institutionalization of jihad at a national level was largely displaced by the overwhelming hegemony of the nation-state system. As a result of this displacement, interpretations of the appropriate theorization of jihad—ranging from individual actions to entire reconfigurations of Christian just-war theories in Islamic terms—emerged.

Among the more frequent critiques leveled against Jihadi-Salafis, either by competing movements or by outside scholars, is that their resort to violence is a mark of their open rebellion (*baghy*) or terrorism (*irḥāb*) against Muslim and non-Muslim societies. Such a charge bears serious legal repercussions for Jihadi-Salafis, as the intentional sowing of discord, social strife, or terror in society is frowned upon by the consensus of all four Sunni schools of legal theory. In a response to the events of September 11, 2001, Hamud bin ʿUqla al-Shuʿaybi penned a brief essay titled "The Meaning and Reality of Terrorism" (*Maʿnā al-irhāb wa-ḥaqīqatuhu*), in which he defended the community from accusations of terrorism. To begin his refutation that the martyrdom operations undertaken in the United States were not acts of terror, al-Shuʿaybi outlines five common definitions used to label acts of terrorism:

1. Terrorism [*al-irhāb*] consists of acts that cause a person to feel fear and a sense of some sort of menace.
2. The importance of terrorism to striking fear in the hearts of people through the use of acts of violence.
3. Terrorism is the intentional and systematic use of its essential means to provoke terror in order to achieve specific goals.
4. Terrorism is a barbaric and heinous act.

5. It is an act that violates social ethics and constitutes a forcible corruption of human dignity.[113]

While he recognizes that these definitions may be valid, al-Shuʿaybi argues that such definitions neglect the underlying power mobilized by states and governments to support their usage. In what is an almost Foucaultian turn, al-Shuʿaybi critiques what seems an arbitrary consideration of what constitutes an act of terror and argues that "each state interprets terrorism to suit its political policies [*siyāsa*] and its interests [*maṣāliḥ*]."[114] Applying this logic to Palestine, al-Shuʿaybi suggests that there is an inherent hypocrisy at work in the logic of those who would condemn or accept the application of violence in differing contexts on the basis of nationality or religious confession of those undertaking the action. For the disbelieving Christian and Jewish Zionists who use the term "terrorism," he writes, terrorism is "Islam and jihad—and terrorists are Muslims who decide to fight [*muslimūn mujāhidūn*]."[115] Though the Islamic legal tradition does recognize terrorism as among the greatest of sins (*kabāʾir al-dhunūb*) because it is an illegitimate use of violence against those who are innocent, al-Shuʿaybi argues that the law also permits the legitimate use of violent tactics when fighting against a known enemy. A terrorist, by his logic, is one who attacks those undeserving of such attacks, but the use of terror as a tactic, he writes, is itself legitimated by the Qurʾan: "And prepare for them whatever you are able . . . to frighten God's enemies [*turhibūna bi-hi ʿadū Allāh*]" (8:60).[116] For al-Shuʿaybi, acts of jihad such as martyrdom operations are not acts of terrorism but instead, as will be explored further in chapter 3, acts that bring those undertaking them closer to the love of God.

This love underlies the entirety of Jihadi-Salafi experience of the divine, whether in the midst of struggle or in the midst of private supplication and prayer. The Jihadi-Salafi renunciation of the world in pursuit of upholding God's divine unity is what will address the threat of contemporary polytheistic corruption. Struggle, here, is a reimagination of disavowal against those contemporary Murjiʾi communities that fail to fully renounce non-Islamic behaviors and invite the corruption of disbelief. This jeopardizes the entirety of the community, as well as the jihad waged against modern disbelievers and polytheists who fail to uphold the unity of God and the sacredness of God's revelation. To avoid this corruption, Jihadi-Salafis demand an active and ongoing pursuit of loyalty to God, an affirmation of God's sovereignty, or—if both are unavoidable—the necessity of jihad modeled on the struggle of the

Prophet and the Salaf. The *ʿaqīda* and *minhāj* of Jihadi-Salafis represent a theodicy imagined against a modern world as a performance of the memory of tradition that allows the authors and their audiences to recreate what is understood to be a lost narrative within which there once resided a true and meaningful relationship with the divine. Without understanding the application of these principles, however, the full emergence of the renunciative subjectivity of the Jihadi-Salafis remains incomplete. It is to the application of these principles to the question of jihad, martyrdom, and suicide through the *minhāj* that we now turn.

3

Intentional Suffering

Self-Renunciative Martyrdom-Seeking in the Path of God

> ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab, may God be pleased with him, said from the minbar, "I heard the Messenger of God, may God's blessing and peace be upon him, say, 'Actions are determined by their intentions. Every man will possess what he intends. So, whoever migrates for worldly gain [*hijratuhu ilā al-dunyā*] or in search of a woman to marry, his migration will be that which he sought.'" —Muhammad bin Ismaʿil al-Bukhari[1]

Seeking Martyrdom, Intending God

In April 2001, amid the al-Aqsa Intifada, the Saudi grand mufti ʿAbd al-Aziz bin ʿAbd Allah Al al-Shaykh addressed the legitimacy of what he termed "suicide operations" (*al-ʿamaliyyāt al-intiḥāriyya*) in an interview with the London-based newspaper *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*. Having stated his unequivocal support for fighting the Israelis by declaring such a struggle to be required and, at times, individually obligatory, the mufti hesitated on the matter of those who would turn their bodies into violent weapons. Rejecting such violence, Al al-Shaykh said: "Those that are called suicide bombings are illegitimate and are not of the jihad in the path of God. I am afraid that they are a form of killing oneself [*qatl al-nafs*]."[2] As the interview continued, Al al-Shaykh condemned the hijacking of aircraft and the terrorizing of civilians. Though the statements were not published as a nonbinding legal decision, a fatwa, they were received by many as a resolute prohibition of such tactics. The lack of context did not temper the outcry in response. Critical fatwas supporting the continuation of martyrdom-seeking operations were soon published by the muftis and jurists of the Minbar al-Tawhid wa-l-Jihad.

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Among those was "Regarding the Fatwa of the Saudi Mufti on the Matter of 'Martyrdom-Seeking Operations'" ("Ḥawl fatwa muftī saʿūdiyya bi-shaʾn al-ʿamaliyyāt al-istishhādiyya"), written by the Palestinian-Jordanian founder of the Minbar, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi. Al-Maqdisi was a longtime antagonist of the grand mufti, having once critiqued the latter's credibility after he remained loyal to a Saudi government that al-Maqdisi claimed to have passed legislation contradicting the tenets and central objectives of the Shariʿa.[3] On the matter of Al al-Shaykh's condemnation of martyrdom-seeking operations, al-Maqdisi wrote: "Know . . . that the presentation of this fatwa by the mufti was dismissive and reckless—especially given this difficult circumstance that continues to face the *umma* of Islam."[4] These operations, al-Maqdisi contended, "are heroic operations [*ʿamaliyyāt baṭūliyya*] which . . . are the furthest from what is considered suicide [*intiḥār*]."[5] Martyrs in the path of God, al-Maqdisi concluded, "keep steadfast faith in God . . . [and] their intention [*ghāyatuhum*] in jihad must be to fight in the cause of God in order to make the Word of God highest."[6]

Almost a decade later, at the outset of the events now referred to as the Arab Spring, another discussion laid bare Jihadi-Salafi critiques of popularized and nationalized martyrs amid the eruption of political upheaval. On December 17, 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi was harassed by a Tunisian security officer because he lacked the necessary permits for his street-vending business. Although reports on Bouazizi's actions following this encounter vary, all agree that he set himself ablaze in a public square. The news of his death and the circumstances surrounding it spread quickly. Governments throughout the region—including those of Tunisia and Egypt—were faced with massive protests and imitative self-immolators and were eventually overthrown in full revolution.[7] Commentators and citizens rushed to the airwaves and the Internet to pronounce their gratitude for the martyr (*shahīd*) Bouazizi.[8]

Much like the militant violence of the Second Intifada, the actions by Bouazizi drew considerable criticism, leading many to express their doubts publicly about his classification as a martyr. Conversations posted on the Minbar condemned the act of self-immolation as an affront against the will and foreordainment of God and an unlawful killing of the self (*qatl al-nafs*). This seemed odd. Most of these self-same jurisconsults were outspoken defenders of the tactical use of martyrdom-seeking operations or *jihādī* operations (*al-ʿamaliyyāt al-jihādiyya*) when Al al-Shaykh forbade them in

2001, and they continued to be outspoken supporters of the operations in the interim. One of the first condemnations appeared on the Minbar in a fatwa titled "The Ruling on the Suicide Who Self-Immolates ("Ḥukm al-muntaḥir ashʿala al-nār fī nafsihi"). The author, Abu al-Mundhir al-Shinqiti—a Mauritian mufti on al-Maqdisi's website and a member of the Shariʿa Council of the Minbar—contended that any individual who self-immolates is similar to a sorrowful or enraged person who commits one of the most atrocious sins: the killing of oneself (*qatl al-nafs*) in order to escape divinely appointed suffering for this life.[9]

A cursory glance at these anecdotes might suggest the muftis were disingenuous. These rulings reflect a selective, pick-and-choose method of jurisprudence meant to praise the sort of extraordinary behavior that fits their violent conceptualizations of jihad in the modern world. The relatively divisive debates held by Jihadi-Salafi authors on the benefit and permissibility of protesting in the Arab Spring might lead us to believe that al-Shinqiti sought to ensure that his movement dictated the conditions of martyrdom, struggle, and political reform. Equally, the refutation of Al al-Shaykh by al-Maqdisi might be seen as an opportunistic tactic by al-Maqdisi to question the support of the Saudi state for the Palestinian cause. A fatwa, however, as a result of both the juridical methodology producing it and the alterations by modern technological and social displacements to the relationship between the jurisconsult (mufti) and the questioner (*mustaftī*), is more than a mere device for mobilizing political and social power. The function of a fatwa across Islamic history was not hortatory or martyrological but rather legal and ethical. For Jihadi-Salafi authors in particular, a fatwa is an opportunity to advise small communities of like-minded adherents across the globe on the maintenance and proper performance of the Jihadi-Salafi *minhāj*, or method for realizing within the world the divinely appointed objectives of God's divinely revealed law, the Shariʿa.

The authors on the Minbar, and those who have left—such as Turki al-Binʿali—pen arguments legitimating martyrdom-seeking operations that create ideal subjectivities on precedents selected from Islamic legal and historical traditions. Such a reimagination of tradition differentiates an act of martyrdom-seeking from a suicide while also transforming the fatwa beyond a genre bearing legal guidance to a source for idealized ethical behavior. The ethical subjectivity of the idealized martyr found in the Jihadi-Salafi fatwas considered here is created not out of the performative act of the martyr but out of the hermeneutical project

of the mufti. Here I follow the argument of Brinkley Messick that the legal subject to whom the law is addressed is a product of what might be termed, in parallel to embodiment, an entextualization—a dialectical process wherein the interpretation of the law occurs relative to an always emerging legal context.[10] The subjectivities used to explain the permissibility of a martyrdom-seeking operation as de jure and de facto an act of martyrdom-seeking relate not to a single individual but rather to imagined, ideal subjectivities that exist in the fatwas and other legal texts produced by Jihadi-Salafi authors.

In summary, what I claim is that though a fatwa might seem addressed to a specific legal question, such as the legitimacy of martyrdom-seeking operations in the Second Intifada, in reality, the fatwas issued by Jihadi-Salafi muftis establish an overlapping consensus. What is present within the fatwas authored by Jihadi-Salafis is a disembodied, entexted subjectivity that will reveal to the reader the ideal ascetical comportment that the believing Muslim is to have toward God and toward the global Muslim community in an act of martyrdom-seeking. This is a model that is decontextualized and ready for transport and replication anywhere in the world. Central to this subjectivity is the possession of correct intentionality (*niyya*), which may be shaped absent any commanding political, religious, or social authority and is best modeled upon the imagined precedent of the earliest community of Muslims surrounding Muhammad, the Salaf. In general, Jihadi-Salafi authors and muftis suggest that a martyr must reject the world (*dunyā*) and all material interests and pleasures and instead intend only love of God and God's Messenger in the act of violence.

The authors on the Minbar and those related speak of this intentionality (*niyya*)—a legal concept within Islamic jurisprudence in texts for both social exchanges (*muʿamalāt*) and ritual practices (*ʿibādāt*)—as opening the possibility for differentiating the subjectivity of a martyr and that of a suicidal individual. Intentionality becomes the basic principle for establishing deontological and teleological obligations related to those seeking to undertake acts of martyrdom-seeking. These fatwas are therefore not martyrologies offering descriptive accounts and praise for specific, individual acts; these are texts instructing the reader in how a martyr should act in order to ensure a sound relation and existential comportment toward the sovereign to whom the martyr submits: God.

On the Question of Suicide: A Divine Examination

At the close of his response to Al al-Shaykh written in May 2001, Hamud bin ʿUqlaʾ al-Shuʿaybi summarized the differentiation between a suicidal individual and a martyr in two concluding paragraphs:

> There is a difference between the suicidal individual [*muntaḥir*] who kills himself due to anxiety [*jazaʿ*] and a lack of patience or displeasure with his fate—or to object to that which has been foreordained [*iʿtirāḍ ʿalā al-maqdūr*]; or has a desire to hasten death or to avoid pain, terrible injury, or tortuous agony; due to hopelessness for any cure; or who is hopeless for any cure for that which is incurable; or has the same apprehension, desperation, or anger for anything else that does not please God.
>
> And between the soul [*nafs*] of the *mujāhid* who is involved in a martyrdom-seeking operation who is joyful, delighted, aspiring to paradise, to what God has willed, to the victory of the faith, terrorizing the enemy, and to jihad in his path—there is no equivalence between them.[11]

Al-Shuʿaybi's position is similar to that of al-Maqdisi and al-Shinqiti. A suicidal individual commits such an act either due to pain and suffering or due to a rejection of the foreordaining will of God. Abu ʿUmru ʿAbd al-Hakim Hasan, the former supporter of the assassins of Anwar Sadat who worked alongside al-Qaʿida in Afghanistan, in the opening of his lengthy fatwa, "The Ruling of Martyrdom-Seeking Operations" ("Hukm al-amaliyyat al-istishhadiyya"), also uses language to this effect: "The suicidal individual [*muntaḥir*] has the curse of God upon him [*ʿalayhi min Allāh al-laʿna*], and he will receive the fire of Hell . . . because of anxiety [*jazaʿ*], his lack of patience [*ʿadm ṣabr*], and desperation with the spirit of God or his weak and nonexistent faith."[12] For Yusuf al-ʿUyayri, whose fatwa is a ruling on the death of Khava Barayeva—one of the "Black Widow" bombers in Chechnya in June 2000—suicide has a broader meaning. A suicidal individual is one whose objective (*qaṣd*) in killing oneself might be a "worldly desire [*al-ḥirṣ ʿalā al-dunyā*] and a desire for material possessions."[13] Suicide, in the argument of these muftis, is a matter of displaced desire and emotion toward material and temporal concerns.

There is also a theodicial dimension underlying the legal arguments for the prohibition of suicide presented by the muftis. This theodicy establishes the first of multiple points by which the jurisconsults gesture toward the

martyrdom-seeking operation as an outward manifestation of the perfectly ordered beliefs internal to the heart of the fighter struggling in the path of God. To take one's life (*nafs*) into one's own hands, and then make the decision to end that life, is an outward act of disobedience that betrays to all observing a critical failure in personal belief and acceptance of the divine foreordainment.

In the earliest of the fatwas penned, Abu Qatada al-Filastini argues that there are clear prohibitions within the jurisprudential sources prohibiting a Muslim from taking his or her own life. Within the Jihadi-Salafi *ʿaqīda*, human existence falls under the inviolable divine authority and sovereignty of God. Human suffering, as part of the existential circumstances of human finitude, is attributed to the divine will and capacity. God is the originator of all human experiences, whether such experiences are desired or otherwise. Physical and mental shortcomings, either innate or due to injury, are, al-Filastini suggests, from God's allowance of misfortune to occur in the lives of believing Muslims. To explain the necessity of such occurrences, al-Filastini provides two reasons: (1) for the purposes of divinely ordained trial and examination (*fitna wa-ibtilāʾ*) or (2) either for the expiation of sins or as an elevation of the believer's status (*takfīr li-dhanūb al-muʾmin aw li-rafaʿ darajatihi*).[14] In this imagining, suffering becomes a mode of examining and shaping the soul and the body of the believer for perfecting submission to God.

Al-Filastini connects the impermissibility of suicide to these two principles through textual evidence in the Qurʾan and prophetic exempla. For the first principle, al-Filastini cites Qurʾan 2:155–156: "We will indeed test you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth, souls, and fruits; and give glad tidings to the patient—those who, when affliction befalls them, say, 'Truly we are God's and unto Him we return." Al-Filastini's choice of *ibtilāʾ* ("examination") gestures to the qurʾanic usage of *wa-la-nabluwannakum* ("We shall examine you"). Equally, the hadith he cites from Abu Isa al-Tirmidhi uses another word from the same root: "Examinations [*al-balāʾ*] will befall the believers, both male and female, in their bodies, their property, and their persons, until they come to God with no measure of offense."[15] Here al-Filastini speaks of God's divine capacity (*qadar*) to do with God's creation as God wills. Such trials are, in his reading, meant to bring about the gradual perfection of the believer. Therefore, those who commit suicide forgo this divine shaping of the self and the forbearance and mercy merited by God for such suffering. The act of taking one's own life becomes a willful

denial of the sovereignty of God. One who denies God's sovereignty must receive a punishment, al-Filastini states, citing a hadith from the collection of Muhammad bin Ismaʿil Abu ʿAbd Allah al-Bukhari. For those who complete by suicide, they are to be denied the promised reward of eternal paradise and guaranteed the punishment of inflicting upon themselves their chosen form of self-killing again and perpetually throughout eternity.[16] Suicide is forbidden because its commission demonstrates an improper use of the one's self (*nafs*), which, in al-Filastini's estimation, is the substance of a human believer that is rightfully God's.

In these examples from al-Shuʿaybi and al-Filastini, there is an implicit connection formed by the jurisconsults between the internal subjective state of the human believer and the outward manifestation of that belief through action. The believer's comportment in the world attests to the acceptance of the narrative of divine sovereignty and provenance in human affairs. One may not simply believe in the narrative of God's ultimate justice—a distinctly Murjiʿi position in the Jihadi-Salafi estimation—but one must also live such that one's life and actions confirm the narrative of suffering in the world. The textual evidence demonstrating a clear prohibition of suicide (*intiḥār*) reinforces for Jihadi-Salafis that the act of the martyr—as an act they frame as occurring in the struggle of advancing God's religion (*dīn*) and justice (*ʿadl*) against tyranny and disbelief—is an act of denying worldly and material concerns, such as suffering, and is therefore an outward confirmation of the acceptance of the theodicy expressing suffering as evidence of God's sovereignty over human affairs.

From a legal perspective, this differentiation between the suicidal individual and the martyr is one of three legal questions and rationales emerging from the central question, "Are martyrdom-seeking operations permissible?" In the fatwa from al-Shuʿaybi, the questioner poses these questions in sequence at the close of the opening statement: "What is the ruling on operations like these? Do you consider this action a form of suicide [*intiḥār*]? What is the difference between suicide and a martyrdom-seeking operation?"[17] The second question was answered in general terms above. A suicidal individual, framed as feeling overcome with concern for material and physical comfort, expresses, in the death by suicide, an internal rejection of the trust in the theodicy offered by God—that God will examine the believers with pain and suffering in order to foster their subjective formation in this life and the next. The third question develops this idea further: in addition to the

subjective differentiation between the suicidal individual and the martyr, the expression of this differentiation in both acts requires explanation.

The first question, however, is a matter of tactics. To rephrase, "Are these operations a permissible tactic of jihad?" If the mufti answers that these tactics are a suicide, agreeing with Al al-Shaykh, then the first question is nullified. However, if the mufti states that the tactic is permissible, and it is not a suicidal act, it is incumbent upon the mufti to establish why the death of the individual engaged in the operation is not a suicide and whether the individual undertaking the operation is capable and eligible to achieve martyrdom. The mufti must therefore provide three separate legal rationales: (1) the rationale (*ʿilla*) legitimating the tactic of the martyrdom-seeking operation becomes a valid legal possibility for the mufti if (2) the rationale (*ʿilla*) prohibiting suicide is acknowledged and (3) the rationale (*ʿilla*) legitimating the death of the individual undertaking the act is considered as martyrdom-seeking. These questions present to the mufti the challenge of identifying the ideal subjectivity that emerges from the confluence of Jihadi-Salafi *ʿaqīda* (creed) and *minhāj* (methodology) and their performance within the world. An act of martyrdom-seeking, unlike an act of suicide, is not performed out of self-concern or self-consideration but is rather an act of performed piety constructed upon a legal subjectivity characterized by its renunciation of the material world (*dunyā*) and its devotion to the unity of God (*tawḥīd*).

To Differentiate a Martyr from a Suicidal Individual: Desiring and Spending in God's Cause

To construct and differentiate the subjectivities of the suicidal individual, on the one hand, and the idealized martyr, on the other, the jurisconsults penning fatwas turn to a close reading of textual indicants drawn from their readings of the Qurʾan, the prophetic Sunna, and the consensus (*ijmāʾ*) of scholars and jurists claimed to be authoritative. Given that an initial, superficial glance at the actions of a suicidal individual and an individual in a martyrdom-seeking operation are similar—both throw themselves into harm in a willful and intentional fashion—the burden rests upon the jurisconsult to categorize the properly ordered self (*nafs*) that is to be sold in a righteous transaction by the faithful believer to God. Between the Qurʾan

and the Sunna, the prohibition against suicide, labeled in the classical sources as *qatl al-nafs* and in modern sources—including the fatwas and other legal texts on the Minbar—as *intiḥār*, is made explicit more through the latter than through the former. As in the evidence provided by al-Filastini above, traditions in which Muhammad speaks plainly on the question of the status of a suicidal individual provide heightened clarity in relation to the qurʾanic passages, which are often explained through the use of the exegetical (*tafsīr*) literature.

There are three qurʾanic passages cited by the jurisconsults to establish the prohibition of suicide:

> And spend in the way of God and do not, with your own hands, cast yourselves into ruin. And be virtuous. Truly God loves the virtuous. (2:195)

> O you who believe! Consume not each other's wealth falsely, but trade by mutual consent, and slay not yourselves. Truly God is merciful unto you [*wa lā taqtulū anfusakum inna Allāh kāna bi-kum raḥīm*]. And whosoever does that in enmity and injustice, We shall cause him to burn in a Fire; and that is easy for God. (4:29–30)

> Say, "Come, I will recite that which your Lord has forbidden you . . . slay not the soul that God has made inviolable, save by right [*wa lā taqtulū al-nafs allatī ḥarrama Allāh ilā bi-l-ḥaqq*]." (6:151)[18]

Of the three, 6:151 is cited the least. Both al-Binʿali and al-Libi cite the verse, but of the two, only al-Libi provides exegetical context for the verse and cites hadith establishing the reason for the verse's revelation.[19] Unlike al-Libi, al-Binʿali relates his citation to his refutation of the prohibition on two recognized authorities of the Jihadi-Salafi *minhāj*: ʿAbd al-Qadir bin ʿAbd al-ʿAziz and Abu Musʿab al-Suri.[20] According to al-Suri, in his *Global Islamic Resistance Call* (*Daʿwat al-muqāwama al-islāmiyya*), ʿAbd al-ʿAziz told him that in the midst of his search for evidence that differentiated an act of martyrdom from an act of suicide, he discovered this verse (6:151) and realized that "jihad against the enemy, for the sake of terrorizing them, is among the strongest rights. . . . [The verse was] indispensable for the issue of the immersion of a man [*inghimās al-rajul*] in the ranks of the enemy, certain of his destruction, yet killed by the hand of the enemy."[21] What is missing from ʿAbd

al-ʿAziz 's statement on immersion, a subject related to the question of the permissibility of the tactic, is the subjectivity of a suicide and a martyr.

Al-Binʿali, whose November 2011 fatwa represents one of the few ISIS fatwas on martyrdom-seeking operations available, intersperses his textual evidence with the commentary of classical and medieval jurists such as Muhammad al-Shaybani (d. 803 or 805) and Ibn Taymiyya. Also present are selections from the fatwas of al-Shuʿaybi, Sulayman al-ʿUlwan, al-ʿUyayri, and ʿAli binKhudayr al-Khudayr. It might be tempting to read al-Binʿali's citation of these individuals as demonstrating a lack of thorough method or independent intellectual rigor. However, al-Binʿali, by citing the words of ʿAbd al-ʿAziz, al-Suri, and the other muftis published on the Minbar—most of whom are deceased—establishes his textual evidence upon the consensus of those considered by Jihadi-Salafis to have exemplified the relationship between creed and methodology sought by the community in its attempt to address and rectify the causes of suffering in the world. al-Binʿali's citation of these individuals is a nascent demonstration of legal precedent that almost overwhelms the reader with citations of juridical consensus in Jihadi-Salafi thought. Though al-Binʿali would publicly break with his mentor, al-Maqdisi, and rise to the office of grand mufti of ISIS, he never published a retraction or edit of his fatwa.[22]

The other verses, 4:29–30 and 2:195, establish two central criteria for differentiating the martyr from the suicide. The first of these, 4:29–30, read alongside specific narrations from the hadith literature, creates the primary conditions for the importance of intentionality and desire to the subjectivity of a martyr. While Qurʾan 4:29–30 may appear to issue a specific injunction against the killing of the self, both the authors on the Minbar and the classical medieval exegetes differ on precisely what sort of violence is prohibited. For Abu ʿAbd Allah Muhammad al-Qurtubi (d. 1272), whose exegesis is often preferred by Jihadi-Salafi jurists given his life amid the Reconquista of al-Andalus at the hands of Portuguese and Spanish Christian armies, "those knowledgeable in qurʾanic interpretation [*taʾwīl*] agree that the purpose of this verse is to prohibit the killing of one group of people by another. Next, they affirm its wording to be a man killing himself for his own purposes or one who, due to worldly desires and the demand for material wealth, abandons himself through substantial error to utter annihilation."[23] The worldly concerns (*ḥirṣ ʿalā al-dunyā*) that al-Qurtubi mentions and the authors on the Minbar cite include anger (*ghaḍab*) and sorrow (*ḍajjar*) for social or political circumstances. Though the verse may prohibit homicide, as al-Qurtubi suggests (along with other exegetes), the authors on the Minbar

consider it a clear prohibition of suicide as an act undertaken due to an excess of concern for matters of this world.

Refusing to Suffer: A Suicide of the Willful

The themes of the corruption of the self by worldly desires and the prohibition of death by suicide are complemented by the authors of the fatwas with selections from the hadith literature. Abu ʿUmru ʿabd al-Hakim Hasan cites a narration on the authority of Abu Hurayra (d. 678) that is shared, in varying forms and from varying collections, by al-ʿUyayri, Abu Saʿd al-ʿAmili, al-Shinqiti, and al-Binʿali:

> The Messenger, may God's blessings and peace be upon him, said of a man who professed Islam to those with him: "He is of the people of the Hellfire." When the fighting began, the man fought valiantly until he was wounded. Some of the people soon assembled. When the man felt the pain of his wounds, he took an arrow from his quiver and committed suicide [*fa-naḥara bi-hā nafsahu*]. Men from among the Muslims ran quickly and said, "Oh Messenger of God! God has confirmed your statement! So-and-so committed suicide [*fulān intaḥara*]! He killed himself [*fa-qatala nafsahu*]!" The Messenger, may God's blessings and peace be upon him, replied, "Oh so-and-so, stand and make an announcement that only a believer will enter Paradise, for truly God will edify the religion [*dīn*] even through this impudent man."[24]

In addition to this hadith, Hasan and al-Filastini cite another narration on the authority of Abu Hurayra outlining what awaits those who commit suicide (*qatl al-nafs*):

> The Messenger, may God's blessings and peace be upon him, said, "Whoever strangles himself, will strangle himself in the fire. Whoever stabs himself, will continue to do so in the fire."

A suicidal individual who fails to tolerate and accept the divinely appointed trials and tribulations of this life, as al-Filastini argued, is punished after death by the same punishment in perpetuity. Suicide, in the estimation of these jurists, is prohibited not simply because it is a disobedient act—all

believers will sin but do so knowing that God is always already merciful. Rather, a suicidal action confirms the disordered self (*nafs*) and its misplaced desire for the material comforts and joys of the world.

A martyr, by contrast, is one in whom God takes great pleasure. Although the paradise of the afterlife is mentioned in a few of the fatwas, there is minimal discussion of the specifics of this reward. Such an absence is notable. If the rewards of paradise become the principal motivation and legal rationale rendering a martyrdom-seeking operation permissible, then the authors create a legal argument whose rationale necessitates forms of material reward. The Qurʾan describes the afterlife as a paradise of gardens, springs, succulent fruits, and beings such as the *ḥūr* who are untouched by man or jinn (*lam yaṭmithhunna ins qablahum wa-lā jānn*).[25] Given that the martyrs are reckoned among those who are with God in the afterlife, to legitimate martyrdom-seeking operations on the basis of paradise would be to appeal to material motivations, which could bring the aspiring martyr treacherously close to the sorts of physical motivations that underlie the prohibition of suicide. While paradise and its pleasures are promised by God—and this is to be praised by Jihadi-Salafis—one must not promote the desire for paradisiacal aspects of the afterlife over the desire for God.

Rejecting Self-Destruction: The Renunciation of Life and "Lord of the Youth"

The final prohibition of suicide, taken from Qurʾan 2:195 ("Spend in the way of God . . . "), is the foundation upon which the authors of the Minbar build the second of the two subjective conditions necessary for establishing the legality of the martyrdom-seeking operation. The verse itself is not cited by a majority of the authors—only al-Zawahiri, al-ʿUyayri, Hasan, and Farghal provide it in their arguments—but when placed in the context of the entirety of the fatwas under consideration here, a consistent narrative describing a transactional relationship between the martyr and God becomes apparent.[26] To provide exegesis of this verse, al-Zawahiri and al-ʿUyayri both cite the *tafsīr* of al-Qurtubi, who, on the basis of a hadith from al-Bukhari, explains the conditions for the revelation of this verse: "'And spend in the way of God and do not, with your own hands, cast yourselves in to ruin [*tahluka*],' was revealed on the matter of spending [*al-nafaqa*] [in the cause of God]."[27] Rather than emphasizing what would seem to be an

obvious prohibition against self-destruction, al-Qurtubi cites several hadith that outline the conditional provisions made for those who throw themselves into the midst of battle.

One hadith, narrated on the authority of Aslam Abu ʿImran and corroborated by the *tafsīr* of al-Qurtubi—who was cited above—involves the departure of a band of Muslims from the earliest community going forth on a raid (*ghazw*) from Medina to al-Qustantinyya (Constantinople). The hadith is cited by al-Zawahiri, al-ʿAmili, al-ʿUyayri, al-Binʿali, al-Maqdisi, and Hasan in their rulings.[28] In the narration, as the Muslims fight against the Rūm (Byzantines), a single man attacks the enemy, and as the Muslims notice this, they cry, "No! No! There is no god, but God! He has thrown himself, by his own hand, to his destruction [*tahluka*]!"[29] Abu Ayyub, who was one of the *anṣār* fighting with the others, corrected the crowd and noted that the revelation of the verse occurred in order to correct the shortcomings of the people of Medina: "When God brought victory to his Prophet and made his religion [*dīn*] ascendant, we said to ourselves, 'Should we not remain here on our property and seek to improve it?' "[30] The verse, in the estimation of al-Qurtubi and in a sentiment shared by the authors of the Minbar, is not a prohibition of mindless self-abandonment on the battlefield but is instead a warning to the people that unless they fight in the cause of God, they risk losing what few earthly possessions they may have to the enemy threatening their existence.[31] This is an extension of the theme introduced by al-Filastini: God, in seeking to make the divine law and order ascendant in this world and to secure the lives of the believers in the next, will make provision for those who orient their desires to the divine will.

Once again, the theme emerges of placing trust in God alone, as the only appropriate sovereign of the spiritual and material provisions granted to the faithful emerges. Behind many of the hadith cited as providing evidence for the permissibility of martyrdom-seeking operations is an underlying logic: by renouncing one's individual concern and placing the faith (*dīn*) ahead of one's own material comfort, one will be able to affirm the divine provenance. The hadith featuring the story of the youth (*qiṣat al-ghulām*), which is cited by twelve of the authors and is considered by al-ʿUyayri to be the strongest evidence for demonstrating the permissibility of undertaking a martyrdom-seeking operation, presents this with great clarity.[32] Although none of the muftis cites the narration in its entirety, all make reference to it at least in part.

According to the hadith, which is included in the collections of Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj and al-Bukhari, a youth (*ghulām*) who has acquired a spectacular power to heal from a local monk refuses to assist the king of his realm.[33] The boy maintains that it is God alone who heals. Incensed, the king brings the boy to court and demands the renunciation of his faith. Having refused, the king orders the boy put to death but fails twice. Finally, the youth teaches the king the precise manner by which he may be killed. The boy insists that the people must be gathered before him, he must be hanged on the trunk of a tree and then shot in the head with an arrow—but before releasing this arrow, the king must say, "In the name of God, the Lord of the youth." On the day of the execution, the king gathers all the people and follows the youth's instructions. Upon seeing the boy die, all the people announce in unison, in a renunciation of the authority of the king, "We believe in the Lord of the Youth!"[34]

At a superficial glance, the actions of the youth seem to have little in common with a self-inflicted death. The youth is killed at the hands of another and is considered a martyr for his refusal to abandon his faith under persecution. For the muftis, the boy's instructing the king on the manner of his death and the use of his death as a witness to the broader community parallel the self-guided death of their ideal martyr. The citation of this hadith and the language used to describe it are essential to understanding the second subjective condition underlying the rationale that will be established to legitimate martyrdom-seeking operations. To explain this hadith, al-Khudayr cites Ibn Taymiyya, who wrote that "the youth ordered his suicide for the sake of the benefit of propagating the faith" (*al-ghulām amara bi-qatl nafsihi li-ajli māṣlaḥat ẓuhūr al-dīn*).[35] Al-Khudayr's teacher, al-Shuʿaybi, agrees that this was for the benefit (*maṣlaḥa*) of the faith and contends that the contemporary individual engaged in a martyrdom-seeking operation would be wise to emulate this youth, because, al-Shuʿaybi says, citing another narration, the youth is an example of the best type of jihad—"a word of truth in the presence of a despotic ruler."[36] The youth is considered by the muftis to be an ideal for the embodiment and performance of a martyr's subjectivity, because his affirmation of his personal suffering rebukes a tyrannical political sovereign. Though the martyr will not provide his or her enemies with specific instructions on how he or she should be killed, this martyr, like the youth, must reject all worldly benefits and remain adamantly steadfast in maintaining a devotional submission to the sovereignty of God.

A Sacred Transaction: Selling Oneself in the Cause of God

The authors on the Minbar construct this relationship as an inner-worldly representation of a salvific existential transaction. Following the hadith of the youth, al-Shuʿaybi cites a narration from the collection of Ibn Abi Shayba that shares similarities with the narration involving the fighting at Constantinople cited by al-Qurtubi. The narration discusses the actions of Hisham bin ʿAmr al-Ansari, one of the companions who alone attacked an overwhelming number of enemy forces. The people, expressing disdain for his action, are chastised by ʿUmar bin al-Khattab (d. 644) and Abu Hurayra, who recite to the people Qurʾan 2:207: "And among mankind is one who sells his soul seeking God's Good Pleasure" (*wa min al-nās man yashrā nafsahu ibtighāʾ marḍāt Allāh*). For al-Shuʿaybi, this verse is evidence of the permissibility of bringing oneself into the midst of certain and discernible harm, and it is one of four that fall under what he considers the juridical consensus on what is variously referred to as "the question of an individual attacking an overwhelming enemy," "the question of immersion [*inghimās*] within the enemy," or "the question of intentionally exposing oneself to harm on jihad [*al-taghrīr bi-l-nafs fī-l-jihād*]."[37] For both questions, the authors use these examples to establish both the characteristics of the individual undertaking the attack and how such arguments legitimate the tactics of such an attack.

Al-Shuʿaybi cites three other verses as textual evidence in support of the permissibility of martyrdom-seeking operations. Of these, two, 9:111 and 8:60, are among the more cited across all of the fatwas and legal texts:

> God has purchased from the believers their lives and their property [*inna Allāh ishtarā min al-muʾminīn anfusahum wa amwālahum*], that they might receive Paradise. They fight in the cause of God. They kill and they are killed. It is a true assurance, binding upon God in the Torah, Gospel, and Qurʾan. None is truer to his covenant than God. Exalt in your bargain that you have made with Him, for that is the most sublime triumph.
>
> Prepare whatever capabilities you have, including warhorses, so that you may strike terror into the enemies of God, your enemies, and others whom you do not know, but of whom God is aware. Whatever you spend [*wa-mā tunfiqū min shayʾ*] in the path of God will be repaid and you will not be wronged.[38]

Once again, the language of spending (*wa-mā tunfiqū*), which appeared in 2:195 and also in the hadith, is included in the context of struggling in the cause of God. This is a spiritual transaction with eternal implications: God is the sole possessor and sovereign of the lives of the faithful, and God will provide in this world and the next for those who make provision to him. There is also a dialectical relationship that emerges when 9:111 and 2:207 are read as complementary—as they are by al-Shuʿaybi and others.[39] In 9:111, God reveals that God has always already purchased from the believers their lives and their property. In exchange for their lives, which may be examined, tested, and taken at God's pleasure, God creates the possibility for their reception of God's promise and their gain of the benefit of a world ordered to bring the souls of believers into the afterlife. To partake of this opportunity, one must not just assert one's belief in the divine—a distinctly Murjiʾi theological stance, as seen earlier—but one must also intend that assertion by selling oneself to God through action within the world. A martyr who abandons all worldly concerns for the sake of jihad does not abandon the self to its destruction, as was seen in the passage from the Qurʾan above, but rather affirms the authentic world as God has always already intended it. The act of martyrdom becomes a performed affirmation of the Jihadi-Salafi theodicial narrative.

Narrations like those of the youth and of the fighting at Constantinople serve both didactic and legal purposes for these authors. The qurʾanic passages and narrations cited by the authors demonstrate the laudable actions of those who go forth in the cause of their God, but both are involved in a complementary relationship as well. The citations from the Qurʾan provide a theoretical structure for imagining the relationships among the subject of the martyr, the act of martyrdom, and the one for whom the martyrdom is undertaken, God. When read in relation to the qurʾanic passages, the hadith literature provides examples of the preferred embodiment of the commands within the Qurʾan. The lessons extracted from the hadith are practical guides illustrating the subjectivity formed by performing the tenets of the Jihadi-Salafi creed in response to the interpretative legal methodology offered by the muftis.

Tossing the World Aside: Intending God in the Act of Martyrdom

Two additional narrations cited by al-ʿUyayri and others confirm this point. In the first, narrated on the authority of ʿAbd Allah ibn Qays, a man of few

means with a shabby appearance hears Muhammad aver that the gates of paradise are under the shadows of swords. Having heard this, the man asks Abu Musa, who was also present, whether this is correct. Abu Musa confirms Muhammad's words, and upon hearing this, "the man turned to his friends, saying, 'To you I say, "Peace." ' Then, he broke his scabbard in two, tossed it aside, and advanced on the enemy with his sword drawn and fought them until he was killed."[40] In the second of the two hadith, a similar symbolic renunciation of the material world is made in favour of the bargain God has made with creation. This hadith, narrated on the authority of Anas, records the actions of ʿUmayr bin al-Hummam. After hearing Muhammad proclaim that paradise (*jannah*) is wider than the heavens and the earth, ʿUmayr repeated the question, Muhammad confirmed the claim, and then:

> ʿUmayr replied, "Ah!" The Messenger of God, may God's blessings and peace be upon him, said, 'What moved you to say, "Ah"?' [ʿUmayr] responded, 'Nothing, by God and his Messenger, but the hope to be among the people of Paradise.' Muhammad said, 'Truly, you are among its people.' ʿUmayr took a handful of dates from his sack, and began to eat them. But, as he did so, he said, 'If I were to live until I eat all of these dates, I will have had a long life.' He threw aside the dates that he had with him, then fought against the enemy until he was killed.[41]

ʿUmayr, like the unnamed man of ragged appearance, sets aside all material concerns and desires and instead seeks only to realize the appropriate relationship with the divine and with the afterlife. What is essential to the muftis, especially in ʿUmayr's example, is that he is told by Muhammad prior to undertaking this act that he is already among the people to whom God has granted paradise. Every hadith inculcates the same ethical principle: a martyr is one who thinks neither of the suffering of self nor of the loss of property but thinks instead of God and the reward that God offers in exchange for a life spent in God's foreordained path.

An act of martyrdom-seeking, unlike an act of suicide, is not performed out of self-concern or self-consideration but is rather an act of an intentionally performed piety constructed upon a subjectivity that seeks to realize the ideal relationship with the divine, thereby confirming the Jihadi-Salafi theodicy. The intention (*niyya*) and purpose (*qaṣd*) of an operation are subjective characteristics described by the authors and muftis to differentiate between

a martyr and a suicide. Prior to any pronouncement of the public benefit (*maṣlaḥa*) of the operations, or their ability to terrorize the enemy, the jurists and authors of the Minbar demand that such tactics be established upon a legal subjectivity that, in its denial of the world (*dunyā*), seeks a foreordained structure of existence that is offered by God alone. Al-Shuʿaybi explains that an individual who has purified his intentions (*khuliṣat niyyātuhu*) is one who will approach martyrdom with a joy in the bargain he has with God.[42] Farghal expresses the conditions for a martyrdom-seeking operation more clearly. When listing his conditions, Farghal requires that individuals must first and foremost "desire, though these operations, the face of God Almighty [*wajh Allāh taʿālā*]."[43]

Al-Shuʿaybi's argument on intention is similar to the discussion on intention found in the lengthy fatwa of al-ʿUyayri. Khava Barayeva, al-ʿUyayri states, died a martyr, because a martyr must not fight for political objectives such as a caliphate or a theocratic state, but instead the martyr must fight with "sincerity [*ikhlāṣ*] of intention for the purpose of seeking the face of God, the objective of raising the word of God, the determination of the necessity ofjihad, and the desire of martyrdom."[44] The martyr must be concerned with matters beyond this world and with matters concerning God alone if the act of the martyr is to have an inner-worldly transformative effect. Additionally, and perhaps just as important, the operation may be waged with inferior numbers and without the permission of any political authority (the imam).[45] This is a principle shared by al-Zawahiri. Both al-Zawahiri and al-ʿUyayri cite al-Qurtubi's *tafsīr* to establish that although the scholars (*al-ʿulamāʾ*) disagree on the matter of a man who surrounds himself with the enemy, most suggest a seemingly reckless immersion in the enemy is permissible if the action is done "on behalf of God through a pure intention [*kāna li-llāh bi-niyya khāliṣa*]."[46] Underlying any desire to throw oneself against the enemy, al-ʿUyayri concludes, must be "sincerity [*ikhlāṣ*] and desire for the face of God [*ibtighāʾ wajh Allāh*], and the desire to make the world of God highest . . . the condition of *ikhlāṣ* is one of the conditions that is considered a condition of legal validity [*sharṭ sīḥḥa*], for when it is omitted, the operation is void [*bāṭil*]."[47]

The fatwa of al-ʿUyayri demonstrates that intention occurs prior to the outward manifestation of any action within the world and is the primary foundation of the legal subjectivity undertaking an operation. Intention is not an objective, physical phenomenon, nor is it produced by any bodily practice, but is instead the initial condition for "the alteration of a judgment and

the differentiation between otherwise similar objective phenomena [*tafrīq bayna al-mutamāthilāyni ẓāhiran*] in legal rulings [*aḥkām al-sharʿiyya*]."[48] While two men may seem to outwardly fight in the cause of God, one fights, inwardly, to elevate the word of God, while the other does not, and for the latter, "the difference of the inner condition [*ikhtilāf al-bāṭin*] merits the fire [*al-nār*], and the former merits paradise [*istahaqqa al-janna*]."[49] Al-ʿUyayri's prioritization of the interior against the exterior clarifies the general statements of al-Shinqiti and al-Shuʿaybi on the matter of suicide. An appropriate jihad is a personal, subjective process that does not emphasize the correct political or social relationships of the martyr—indeed, these would be considered "worldly concerns" and might corrupt the intention away from its appropriate direction—nor does it emphasize "nothing" (i.e., the act is not nihilistic, nor does it end in "self-annihilation"); rather, intention is the first mode of existence from which an individual constructs the exemplary relationship with God, and it is the first point from which the legitimacy of the tactics of martyrdom-seeking operations are established. The legitimacy of these tactics is the subject of chapter 4.

A Renunciative Intentionality: Locating the Ascetical Act of Martyrdom-seeking

I am not alone in my observation of this intentionality. David Cook was among the first historians of jihad to observe the shift in Jihadi-Salafi rhetoric emphasizing the importance of martyrdom-seeking operations and the role of intentionality for their legitimization. Contemporary Jihadi-Salafi movements and adherents place extraordinary importance on the asymmetry of their conflict, and therefore they have spent much more time than their predecessors (e.g., Hamas and Hizbullah) to legitimate the tactic as a means of ameliorating their material shortcomings. Intentionality, Cook argues, provides Jihadi-Salafi jurists with a mechanism for their legal absolution—any obligation to make a final ruling on the permissibility of the operation is displaced to the individual receiving the fatwa. Throughout his work, Cook has dismissed this move by Jihadi-Salafi muftis, claiming that "modern apologists of 'martyrdom operations' do not appear to confront these questions seriously, in stark contrast to their medieval predecessors who established clear boundaries for warfare."[50] While classical and medieval jihad theories established specific guidelines for warfare, these legal

arguments create a willing martyr with carte blanche who undertakes an attack outside of the traditionally authoritative theories of jihad.

What Cook leaves unresolved is how that intentionality fits into a carefully constructed narrative of ascetical renunciation that is essential to understanding how Jihadi-Salafi muftis frame their theodicy and imagine its expression in pursuit of martyrdom. The classical theory of jihad, for Cook, used intention to ensure that jihad was a spiritual exercise. Modern legitimations of martyrdom operations, however, state that "if one *intends* that an action such as a martyrdom operation—which could kill a large number of civilians—achieve a permitted military purpose, then it is the same as if the action accomplished nothing more than the goal for which it was intended; all other consequences are ignored if the assessment was legitimate."[51] This utilitarian opportunism, Cook contends, is an exploitation of the vacuum of authority plaguing contemporary Islamic thought. For Cook, "*mujahidin* increasingly see themselves as the arbiters of what is right and what is wrong in jihad, and feel that their position as the staunchest defenders of Islam gives them the authority that the 'court' *ʿulamāʾ* have abdicated."[52] Any authority gained by these combatants is established upon the spectacular acts of violence and conflict that they manage to defend through what are, at best, legal arguments meant to appeal to populist Jihadi-Salafi fronts. Intentionality, as the sole operative legal rationale within the fatwas of the Jihadi-Salafi muftis, is nothing more than a means of stripping the law of its classical obligations to restrict and constrain the use of violence.

Intentionality, however, is not the rationale that legitimates the tactic of martyrdom-seeking. The function of intentionality is to establish the legal subjectivity of a martyr against that of a suicide, to ensure that one undertaking the tactic is not considered suicidal. Once that subjectivity is established, then the possibility of undertaking the tactic of martyrdom-seeking operations is made available to both the jurist and the questioner. Intentionality, which acts as a rationale for differentiating between martyrdom and suicide, remains a prerequisite to the rationale creating the possibility for the permissibility of the tactic. To speak of intentionality is to speak of the appropriate comportment one must have toward one's acts.

While the primary purpose of the intentional legal subjectivity created by the authors of the Minbar and later Jihadi-Salafi jurists is to demonstrate that an individual undertaking a martyrdom operation is not a suicide, the subjectivity, as a product of the interpretative activity of a mufti in the Jihadi-Salafi *minhāj*, is an idealized description of the performance of the ascetical

and renunciative tendencies of the Jihadi-Salafi creed. For Jihadi-Salafis, this renunciation shares more parallels with the practices of the earliest Muslim communities, the Salaf, and also the ascetical jihad waged on the early frontiers of the nascent Islamic empire, than it does with the structured jihad of the classical and medieval jurists and their schools. Cook and those who would evaluate the Jihadi-Salafi emphasis on medieval juridical scholarship miss this act of appropriative imagination. A utilitarian approach to martyrdom-seeking operations is not a cynical, if not lazy, attempt to make the illicit permissible. It is instead an attempt to locate the self-renunciative act of martyrdom within a longer tradition of jihad.

The usage of intentionality, therefore, may not align closely with the understanding of intention (*niyya*) presented throughout works of classical *fiqh*. Discerning a martyr's intentions is nearly impossible. Jihadi-Salafis instead focus on describing the characteristics of an ideal intentionality rather than explaining how to discern the inner spirit of a martyr. For the would-be martyrdom seeker, intentionality is a cultivated relationship with the divine, but that relationship is confirmed to the faithful by the in-the-world performance of the would-be martyr. This helps us understand al-Maqdisi's concern about whether these are "jihadi" or "martyrdom" operations. One may call an operation a martyrdom-seeking operation only if the actions of the would-be martyrdom seeker compare with a model of the inherited tradition of the Salaf. Intentionality is not a matter of "criminal intent" but is instead a range of characteristics meant to be aligned with prior generations of those who fought and died for the faith.

Intentionality in Conversations of Jihad

The matter of intention (*niyya*) has had a close relationship to matters of belief and jihad since at least the eighth century CE. The earliest-known work on jihad, the *Kitab al-Jihad* of Abu ʿAbd Allah ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Marwazi, or as he is more widely known, ʿAbd Allah ibn al-Mubarak (736–797), also published in a digital edition on the Minbar al-Tawhid wa-l-Jihad, outlines the role of intention in the asceticism (*zuhd*) and jihad of Ibn al-Mubarak and his fellow scholarly ascetics.[53] Ibn al-Mubarak, who was a contemporary and colleague of Abu Ishaq l-Fazari (d. ca. 802), spent most of his life engaged in the struggles along the *thughūr*—the Arab-Byzantine frontier—as a volunteer struggling for the merit of God outside of political oversight.

The idea of intention as a method of self-renunciation endorsed by Ibn al-Mubarak opens a new avenue of exegesis for contemporary Jihadi-Salafi discussions of martyrdom-seeking. By reflecting upon the description of a self-renunciative and ascetical martyr in Ibn al-Mubarak's texts, Jihadi-Salafis establish his asceticism and self-renunciation as exemplary ideals for would-be martyrdom-seekers.

The *Kitab al-Jihad* is a book of narrations. As with any such collection, scholars often question the veracity and reliability of its transmission. The volume and quality of these transmissions locate Ibn al-Mubarak among the third generation of the most trustworthy transmitters.[54] Ibn al-Mubarak himself, queried about the potential for transmitting less-sound narrations, once stated that weak transmissions must not form the basis of legal practice but are rather more suitable for establishing "sound comport [*adab*], moral admonition [*mawʿiẓa*], asceticism (or pious abstention, *zuhd*) and the like."[55] There is some overlap between this work and another of Ibn al-Mubarak's texts, the Book of Asceticism (*Kitab al-Zuhd*)—suggesting that at least a few of these hadith must possess questionable or problematic *isnād*s. Without possessing a close evaluation of Ibn al-Mubarak's science of hadith, a brief historical anecdote must suffice to establish the reception of his text. It is said that having heard Ibn ʿAsakir give a public recitation of the *Kitāb al-Jihād* in Damascus, Abu al-Hasan bin Munqidh—brother of the famed Arab chronicler Usama—"volunteered to raise the siege of Ascalon, and soon afterward achieved martyrdom."[56]

Jihad, for Ibn al-Mubarak, is a voluntary individual activity that is meant to distance the believer from the ties of community, property, and the physical world and draw the believer nearer to God. This definition of his jihad has led to readings of his work as apocalyptic (in the work of Cook), ascetical (in the work of Sizgorich), and an exemplum for conducting oneself, absent political authority, in the jihad (in the work of Bonner).[57] Critical to each of these appraisals is the understanding, shared by all three scholars, that Ibn al-Mubarak understood his personal ascesis and his personal jihad as complementary activities. Ibn al-Mubarak transmits that Muhammad stated that "every community [*umma*] has a monasticism, and the monasticism of my community is jihad in the path of God [*jihād fī sabīl Allāh*]."[58] Critiquing the claim by earlier scholars that Ibn al-Mubarak was involved in the antimonastic movements in early Islam, Sizgorich writes that the intentional diminution of the self, as an ascetical act, "made *jihād* a venue in which acts of martial valour or conquest (or simple raiding, theft, or murder) could

be reinscribed as acts of piety and moments of communion with the numinous."[59] It is the subjectivity that frames the ground by which seemingly profane actions are reinscribed as sacred. Jihad, as a struggle in the preordained path of God culminating in reward (*ajr*) and martyrdom (*shahāda*), becomes, as Hamid al-ʿAli calls it, the summit (*dhurwa*) of jihad.[60]

The language of reward parallels the language of economic exchange, as seen in the writings of al-Shuʿaybi and his students and also in the work of Ibn al-Mubarak. On the matter of 9:111, where God reveals the divine purchase of the souls of all of those who have believed, Ibn al-Mubarak transmits a tradition on the authority of al-Filastini stating that the meaning of this verse is that "God set their price, and it is most expensive for them."[61] For Ibn al-Mubarak, what is essential about the relationship between the individual and the divine is the lack of mediation. The notion of the divine promise takes precedence over all else. Bonner argues that for Ibn al-Mubarak, when waging jihad outside of the control or oversight of a political authority, "the individual, while striving for individual merit and salvation, has also internalized the needs and goals of the entire community."[62] The economic exchange made between the individual and God is also an exchange made between the individual and the community.

If we were to frame this discussion in concepts popularized in later (third–seventh/ninth–twelfth century) legal scholarship, we would suggest that jihad is, for Ibn al-Mubarak, more of an individual obligation (*farḍ al-ʿayn*) than a communal obligation (*farḍ al-kifāya*). Yet this would be incomplete. Ibn al-Mubarak demands that those wishing to pursue the jihad must depart from their homes and families while spending freely of their material goods in God's path, but they must do so not just to fight an enemy but also to more fully realize their own relationship with the divine. Throughout the *Kitab al-Jihad*, Ibn al-Mubarak returns again and again to typologies of martyrs and typologies of men (*rijāl*) on jihad. For example:

> The slain are three [categories] of men: a believing man who strives with himself [*jāhada bi-nafsihi*] and his possessions in the path of God until, once meeting the enemy, he fights them [*qātalahum*] until he is killed. That is the examined martyr [*al-shahīd al-mumtaḥan*] resting in the tranquility of God under his throne and the prophets are given precedence to him only by the measure of prophethood [*nubūwwa*]. [Second:] a believing man, who corrupts himself with sins and transgressions, strives with himself [*jāhada bi-nafsihi*] and his possessions in the path of God until, once

> meeting the enemy, he fights until he is killed. That one is purified; his sins and transgressions are wiped away. Truly, the sword purifies all transgression! He enters into any of the gates of paradise which he wills. . . . [Third:] a hypocritical man who strives with himself and his possessions in the cause of God until, once meeting the enemy, he fights until he is killed. That one is in the fire. The sword cannot purify hypocrisy.[63]

The word for intention, *niyya*, is conspicuously absent from the discussion. Evident, however, is the implicit connection shared among intentionality, its relationship to jihad as a preparatory purification for the afterlife, and the status of the self in the afterlife. All three of these men endanger the self (*nafs*) by struggling in the cause of God until being overcome in battle by the enemy. It is not their actions in the world that jeopardize their status in the afterlife but rather their internal states. The third man is not condemned to the fire on the basis of his external actions in jihad, which were identical to those of his colleagues, but rather as a result of his personal hypocrisy. While Ibn al-Mubarak transmits language that is different from that of al-Filastini mentioned earlier, both use words related to examination—either *ibtilāʾ* or *imtaḥana*—to describe those who appropriately order their intentions toward God and God's right of ownership held over them. Martyrs are those who have welcomed the examination of their Lord and those who have sold themselves to God as believers and fighters in the cause of God.

The renunciation of the world does not mean that Ibn al-Mubarak calls for an abandonment of the material concern altogether. Rather, it means that one must never become complacent with the material pleasures offered by the world. In his commentary on the example of ʿUmayr, cited earlier, Ibn al-Mubarak demonstrates that ʿUmayr's wonder at the promises of Muhammad might also be his simultaneous disdain for the imperfect pleasures of this world:

> Abu Bakr bin Hafs said, "The Messenger of God, may peace be upon him, recited on the day of Badr: 'And hasten toward the forgiveness of your Lord. A garden spanning the heavens and the earth has been prepared for those who are righteous [Qurʾan 3:133].'" A man from among the *anṣār* said, so it was said to Ibn Qasḥam, "Ah!" Abu Bakr bin Hafs said that "Ah" has two meanings: one is an expression of wonder, another rejection. The [Messenger of God] said, may peace be upon him, "What do you mean by saying, "Ah"? He replied, "Messenger of God, do you know whether I would

> live in comfort if I were to enter it [i.e., the garden]?" Muhammad replied, "Of course!" Then, Ibn Qasham said, "Messenger of God, what lies between me and the Garden?" Muhammad replied, "To meet it, disavow the people [*walāʾ al-qawm*] and trust God [*taṣduqu Allāh*]." Ibn Qasham said, "So, he threw aside the dates that were in his hand, he withdrew from tasting of the world [*takhallā min ṭaʿām al-dunyā*], then he went forth and fought until he was killed."[64]

Although Ibn al-Mubarak does not mention ʿUmayr by name, many of the details remain the same: the promise of the garden, the exclamation, tossing aside the dates, and fighting until killed. Ibn al-Mubarak's narration provides additional insight into the renunciative aspects of the action of ʿUmayr. The tossing aside of the dates symbolizes his outward expression of his inward intention to renounce the world and agree to the promise God has provided through God's Messenger: eternity for those who sell themselves in the way of God. Even the exclamation "Ah!" (*bakh*) falls under Ibn al-Mubarak's exegetical transmission. This unnamed individual, presumably ʿUmayr, expressed wonder at what God has offered but also expressed disdain for the inability of the world to completely fulfill the innermost desires of the faithful.

Proper intention guides the relationship of the self with God. As Ibn al-Mubarak transmits elsewhere in the text: "A youth struggles for the world; a youth struggles for power; a youth struggles out of manliness, and so forth. And then a youth struggles while desiring the face of God. Whoever is killed desiring the face of God [*yurīdu wajh Allāh*]—that one is in paradise."[65] This is almost exactly the same language used by Farghal, al-ʿUyayri, and others. Again, we see that across these examples of young combatants, only the youth who appropriately intends God receives paradise. Cook identifies the expiation of sin achieved by this intentional subjectivity as a common element of martyrdom literature. For Cook, "patience and intention are intertwined within the martyr because he or she knows that God's will is being fulfilled through the sufferings being endured."[66] Sizgorich pushes this conceptualization in a more subjective, ascetical direction. Given that Ibn al-Mubarak was himself engaged in his own personal ascetic practice, Sizgorich contends that in the *Kitab al-Jihad*, "the intersection of *jihad* and ascetic practice has much to do with asceticism's perceived capacity to prepare the individual Muslim to craft his inner life in such a manner that his actions in life might resonate as expressions of his absolute subjection to his community and his God."[67] By engaging in an active self-denial of the world, power, and any

potential merit—and intending the face of God—one would gain the favor of God, a proper reward (*ajr*), and a guaranteed status in the afterlife.[68]

Intentional Renunciation in the Cause of God

To possess sincere intention is to cultivate the capacity to affirm suffering in this world and affirm the divine promise for those afflicted. This rejection of the world is not an open-ended self-sacrifice performed out of blind faith but the intentional realization of a transactional arrangement struck by God with God's faithful servants. Talal Asad, in his analysis of the modern phenomenon of suicide bombing, writes that although intentions may shape the action, the motives of the actor remain inscrutable to researchers forcing analysis not of the "essence" of the act but analysis "in its contingent circumstance."[69] Declining to theorize the subjectivities of suicide bombers, Asad instead focuses his attention on the Western consumption of the phenomenon—the theater of the security apparatus deployed for personal safety, the willful violation of political and legal rights to pursue the perpetrators, and the production of an entire security industry—to understand the ambivalence with which Western culture approaches self-sacrifice, the horror with which it approaches bodily and subjective dissolution, and the frustration with which it experiences its inability to punish the person undertaking such an act for the perpetration of a violent crime. Suicide bombings, he concludes, are not sacrifices but represent precisely what is lost in the hyperresponsive protection of secular modernity by Western society: "the limitless pursuit of freedom, the illusion of an un-coerced interiority that can withstand the force of institutional disciplines."[70] Suicidal terrorism becomes, for Asad, a counterperformance against the violence hidden within the foundation of modern liberal political projects.

The doctrine of *al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ*, an essential renunciative component of the Jihadi-Salafi *ʿaqīda*, when read in relation to the renunciative subjectivity outlined with the Jihadi-Salafi fatwas legitimating martyrdom-seeking operations, brings into question Asad's conclusion. If the theodicy offered by Western political and social modernity rejected by the Jihadi-Salafi authors is the narrative that the intentional act of the martyr must counter, then the renunciation of that theodicy and affirmation of the divine order are performed in the act of martyrdom. Here the intentional martyrdom called for by the jurists becomes a world-transformative step.[71] By this logic, the

Jihadi-Salafi movement, as an ascetical movement, undermines in its renunciation of the world the theodicial narrative of the liberal and Western modernity Asad claims it is founded upon.

Richard Valantasis develops a theory of the social function of asceticism that identifies four major social dimensions to the formation of ascetical subjectivity: asceticism (1) enables the person to function within the reenvisioned or recreated world, (2) provides the method for translating these theoretical and strategic concepts into patterns of behavior; (3) reenvisions the world and human life within it by requiring intensive perceptual transformation, and (4) provides the means through which other domains of knowledge and understanding can be incorporated into the reenvisioned world. These four dimensions assist in our realignment of the framing of martyrdom in Jihadi-Salafi discourse.

The renunciations demanded by the Jihadi-Salafi creed, including the renunciation of Western democracy, materialism, and liberal social ethics, are not mere escapist or otherworldly movements of a soul focused on the cosmic domain. By renouncing the world and referring all intentionality to God, the ascetical Jihadi-Salafi martyr turns an act of martyrdom and the cultivation of intentionality for it into an instrument of inner-worldly affirmation of suffering that imagines the martyr within a centuries-old narrative of renunciants who challenged the tyrants (*ṭaghūṭ*) of their own lands and circumstances. The ascetical subjectivity of the idealized martyr is imagined to be in close conversation with the historical precedent of the earliest Muslim ascetical combatants of whom Ibn al-Mubarak was part, and, like these earliest communities, these renunciants see in their intentional act the methods for disciplining the self and returning the disbelieving other to the straight path of Islam. What remains of Valantasis's definition is the second dimension.

Based on the numerous items of documentary evidence left behind by the September 11, 2001, hijackers, the role of intentionality was essential to the ideal subjectivity they sought to cultivate, and it is highly probable that this was a result of influence from the teachings of the Jihadi-Salafi *minhāj*. The four-page text of what has been termed the "Spiritual Manual" of the al-Qaʿida hijackers is a document meant for the edification and preparation of the hijackers as they prepare physically and spiritually for their act. The author of the document, ʿAbd al-ʿAziz al-ʿUmari, who was one of the nineteen, was identified by Ramzi bin al-Shibh (b. 1972), who is presently detained at the detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Confirmed reports

indicate that al-ʿUmari was a student of Sulayman al-ʿUlwan, a student of al-Shuʿaybi.[72]

The document reads like a physician's memorandum meant to diagnose one's emotions and condition one's soul for martyrdom. The first instruction given to the reader of the document is to undertake an "assertion of the mutual pledge to die and the renewal of intention" (*al-tabāyuʿ ʿalā al-mawt wa tajdīd al-niyya*).[73] Following this, the reader is encouraged, with verbs in the imperative form, to "purify your heart, cleanse from it all blemishes and forget or become oblivious to this thing called the world [*dunyā*]."[74] Once having prepared the mind and soul, the hijackers are instructed to prepare the body through washing. Finally, the reader is encouraged to emulate Muhammad and the companions. As an example of this, the manual cites the precedent of ʿAli, cousin and son-in-law to Muhammad, as an exemplar for how to wage jihad, in much the same way that the hadith listed above functioned for the authors on the Minbar: "Do not act out of vengeance for yourself, but make your assault and everything else be for God Almighty."[75]

Once again, vengeance is discouraged. The manual reminds the hijacker to be joyful—even to smile—as the action unfolds. As the manual continues, it does not cite the passages related to an economic transaction, as seen in Qurʾan 2:207 or 9:111, but instead cites another verse related to purchase, Qurʾan 4:74: "Let them fight in the way of God, those who would sell the life of this world for the Hereafter" (*fal-yuqātil fī sabīl Allāh alladhīna yashrūna al-ḥayāt al-dunyā bi-l-akhira*)."[76] The hijackers are encouraged, as they enter the plane, to remind themselves that this is a raid (*ghazw*) on the path of God.[77] The choice of language is intentional and is meant to reflect, as Hans Kippenburg has observed, that "the violence in the plane is conceived of as a re-enactment of the Medina *ghazwa*s, in particular the War of the Trench."[78] The reason is hortatory; the believer is reminded of the rewards promised to those who sold their souls to God while fighting and struggling in the path of God.[79] Were the acts for vengeance, the hijackers would have acted in a manner contrary to the historical examples toward which the manual sought to guide them.

To possess sincere intention is to possess the capacity to endure suffering in this world and attain a gratifying sustenance in the afterlife. This intention is not a product of the purifying actions leading to the act but is primary to them. By forming the correct intention to God, an individual is able to ensure that any subsequent act is already mediated by divine sovereignty and able

to transform the world to the sovereign's will. Two pamphlets featured on the Minbar reveal the renunciative aspects of the intention of this legal subject. One, "44 Ways to Support Jihād," was written, in English, by Anwar al-ʿAwlaki—who once studied with a student of al-Shuʿaybi's, Salman al-ʿAwda, and who was killed by an American drone in Yemen in 2011.[80] Al-ʿAwlaki is believed to have been in direct contact with three of the 9/11 hijackers, with Nidal Hasan (the accused Fort Hood shooter), and with ʿUmar Faruq Abdulmutallab (who attempted to destroy Northwest Airlines flight 253; see chapter 1).[81] The other, "39 Ways to Serve and Participate in the Jihad" ("39 Wasila li-Khidmat al-Jihad wa-l-Musharaka fihi") was penned by ʿIsa bin Saʿd Al ʿAwshin (or Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Salim), who may have studied with al-Shuʿaybi and worked with al-ʿUyayri to publish materials and raise financial support for the Chechen jihad.[82] Both men begin their discussions by asserting that the first step on the path to jihad is the formation of correct intention.[83] ʿAwshin, however, does not use the word *niyya* but instead suggests that in preparing, one must "resolve one's innermost self for jihad [*taḥdīth al-nafs bi-l-jihād*]."[84] The achievement of appropriate intention is made apparent to the potential martyr by the feeling of grief. At least superficially, al-ʿAwlaki seems to disagree. Al-ʿAwlaki states that while shaping one's intention is important, one must manifest this intention by outwardly preparing for the jihad.[85] However, one will know that one has the correct inward intentionality for jihad if, in the event the departure for jihad is delayed—or fighting itself is impossible—the individual "is sad that he is exempted from jihad."[86] ʿAwshin agrees, but he adds that "resolving one's innermost self for fighting negates the attribute of hypocrisy within the person [*taḥdīth al-nafs bi-l-ghazw yanfiyuʿan al-insān ṣifat al-nifāq*]."[87] For both men, the intention for jihad is an internal state that, if cultivated properly, will manifest physical confirmation of its purity to the self and to God through physical action and manifestation.

Al-ʿAwlaki and Samir Khan, a US citizen who was killed with al-ʿAwlaki in Yemen, developed the expression of this idea of a renunciative intentionality further in their magazine *Inspire*. The magazine, under their guidance, contained a four-part series of articles by Mukhtar Hassan titled "What to Expect in the Jihad" Hassan explained that for the Jihadi-Salafis:

> Our vision in training is to make every mujtahid an army by himself that roams the earth, knowing what to do in many situations, and has the ability to devastate the enemy like a thousand-man army. Training camps are

> meant to test both your mental and physical capabilities. Courses in religion are meant to give strength to the soul. The niyyah is what is underlined through the camp so that the mujtahid enters the battle with a great shot of entering his eternal dwelling in Paradise.[88]

Mukhtar continues to recommend dual regimens of mental and physical training to ensure that the body is prepared for the challenges of fighting on the frontier. The next issue of the magazine discussed the practical aspects of intentionality in the martyrology of Abu Hatim. According to the author, writing under the name Abu Qaʾqa, "everything you do is multiplied by zero if the *niyyah* is not sincerely for Allah. . . . Your intention can take you to stations that actions cannot." Abu Hatim's intention (*niyya*), Abu Qaʾqa writes, was essential to understanding Abu Hatim's sublime calm in the face of overwhelming violence.

Conclusion

The unique intentional subjectivity present in the texts legitimating martyrdom-seeking operations on the Minbar is a narrative of the self in relation to theodicy, derived from an interpretation of textual evidence and historical examples that emerges from two performances. The first is the performance of the author who works astride hybrid narratives. One of these narratives is drawn from the Qurʾan and the Sunna, and this narrative contains within it the divine authority of revelation and prophetic spirituality. Ibn al-Mubarak and the ascetics on the earliest frontiers of the Islamic empire constitute the other narrative. These ascetics, by renouncing the world—including most of the political and scholarly institutions of Islamic thought—positioned themselves as what Sizgorich labels "the one true community of God."[89] Like these early ascetics, the Jihadi-Salafi scholars of the Minbar envision their renunciation of the world, through principles such as *al-walā wa-l-barāʾ*, as that of the community of Ibrahim—the *millat Ibrāhīm*—a monotheistic community whose sole sovereign in all actions is God.

The second performance emerging from the narrative of the self within the fatwas is the narrative of the martyrdom-seeking operation itself. Not considered to be committing an act of suicide, the martyr undertaking an operation is understood by the jurists to have formed a pious, intentional

subjectivity that intends with the act nothing more than the purest of desires for elevating God and God's word alone. In the estimation of the jurists on the Minbar, such an individual exists beyond the traditional political and institutional authorities. The performance of the memory of the Salaf is one that requires the renunciation of all prior juridical arguments save those deemed by the Jihadi-Salafis to uphold the traditions of Muhammad's community. It is the renunciation of modern hegemonic powers—those such as the West and its allied Muslim-majority governments that constitute the "dominant culture" of Valantasis's framing—that so terrifies others. Here Asad's argument does prove useful: this is an exercise of freedom outside of the law, as he puts it, and one that draws into question the coercive violence of the Western political order.[90] Yet, as I argue here, while the individual motivations of a martyrdom seeker may remain inscrutable, the arguments of Jihadi-Salafi jurists and authors sympathetic to these acts are clear. A martyrdom seeker possessed of proper intention is a living genealogical heir of the tradition of the Salaf preserved within the memories of the texts of jurists and communities long since passed.

Thus, there is a third performance: the act of martyrdom itself. Once the proper intention is formed, the individual seeking martyrdom steps into a legal space, established upon prior tradition and precedent, which permits the use of the self as a tactical weapon of war against disbelieving enemies in order to defend the welfare of the greater community and the unhindered observance of the creed binding it together. The final legal argument remaining in these fatwas reveals the instrumentality of this intentional self when it becomes a weapon of war in the cause of God.

4

Of Debatable Benefit

Maṣlaḥa and the Tactic of Martyrdom-Seeking

> Mudrik bin ʿAwf al-Aḥmasī said, "I was with ʿUmar when a messenger from al-Nuʿmān bin Muqrin arrived. ʿUmar asked him about the condition of the people. He said, 'So-and-so and so-and-so were wounded. I do not know them.' Then, ʿUmar said, 'But God knows them.' The messenger responded, 'O Commander of the Faithful, one man sold himself [to God].' Mudrik bin ʿAwf said, 'Yes, by God, my uncle was among them, Commander of the Faithful. People claim that he cast himself to his own ruin.' ʿUmar responded, 'Whoever claims that is a foremost liar among you. He is of those who sold this world for the next.'" —A narration from *Al-Kitab al-Musannaf* of Ibn Abi Shayba[1]
>
> Therefore, O battalions of *inghimāsiyyūn*, O caravans of *istishhādiyyīn*, and detachments of *iqtiḥāmiyyīn*, O seekers of *shahāda*, the best reward, and more than that, O you who strive toward the Gardens and the pleasure of Allah, go forth with Allah's blessing, for indeed, this war is your war." —Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi[2]

Beneficial Martyrdom? Debates on Violence in the Service of God

Following their final preparations and prayers on November 9, 2005, Rawad Jasim Muhammad ʿAbid, Safaʾ Muhammad ʿAli, and Sajida Mubarak ʿAtrus al-Rishawi, along with al-Rishawi's husband, ʿAli Husayn ʿAli al-Shamari, strapped on explosive belts and set out for west Amman. Al-Shamari and al-Rishawi, an Iraqi whose sister's then-deceased husband was a close aide of Abu Musʿab al-Zarqawi, headed to the Radisson SAS Hotel while ʿAbid left for the nearby Grand Hyatt and ʿAli sought out a Days Inn several miles

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away. Their attacks began at 8:50 p.m. Explosions of superheated shrapnel and debris tore through the Philadelphia Ballroom of the Radisson, the lobby of the Days Inn, and the street near the Grand Hyatt. Recovery took days. By the time authorities were through, 175 casualties were counted, including 60 deaths, most of whom were members of a wedding party taking place inside the Radisson.

Nine days later, al-Zarqawi, a former pupil and cellmate of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi while both were inmates in a Jordanian prison, released a statement accepting responsibility for organizing the attacks and defending his selection of the targets.[3] Al-Zarqawi, who in 2004 established the Jamaʿat al-Tawhid wa-l-Jihad (Group of Monotheism and Jihad), which was later renamed the Tanzim Qaʾidat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn (Organization for the Foundation of Jihād in Mesopotamia), argued that the attacks in Amman were meant to target US and Israeli officials staying in the Western hotels that were, he said, "centers of immorality."[4] Although he beseeched God to be merciful to the souls of any Muslims killed during the attacks, al-Zarqawi promised that Jordanian cities would continue to be targets for future aggression because of the Hashemite monarchy's continued support of US efforts within Iraq and the region as a whole.

Prior to the Jordanian operations, al-Zarqawi's heavy-handed use of violence against Iraqi civilians and his high-profile execution of US citizen Nicholas Berg had drawn the condemnation of al-Maqdisi. Once again imprisoned in Jordan in 2004, al-Maqdisi penned two documents: a brief essay titled, "Al-Zarqawi: Amal wa-alam (Munasira wa-munasiha)," in which he outlined his relationship to al-Zarqawi with a personal admonishment, and a longer document, "Waqafat maʿa thumrat al-jihad" ("Appraisals of the Fruits of Jihad"), which was al-Maqdisi's critical analysis of the use of martyrdom-seeking operations in Iraq.[5] In an interview shortly following his release from prison in June 2005, al-Maqdisi summed up his position succinctly:

> I do not shut the door on these operations, but I also do not fling the door wide open. . . . My project is not to blow up a bar, my project is not to blow up a cinema, my project is not to kill an officer who has tortured me. . . . My project is to bring back to the Islamic nation its glories and to establish the Islamic state. This does not come by small vengeful acts. . . . Every stage has its priorities, and at this stage I do not want Iraq or any other place to become a furnace consuming the sons of this movement. . . . Since when did

> we speak of killing women and children? Since when did we speak of killing the laymen of the Shiʿa? Since when did we say anything like that?[6]

The tension between al-Zarqawi, who claimed that the battlefield casualties of civilians and noncombatants were necessary for achieving victory over the crusading forces of the United States and its coalition allies, and al-Maqdisi, who argued that his legitimation of martyrdom-seeking operations was a moderate position on the use of the tactic, was characterized by a tension between theoretical formulation and practical application. Swearing an oath (*bayʿa*) to Usama bin Ladin—who, along with Ayman al-Zawahiri, was also eventually critical of the use of martyrdom-seeking operations in Iraq—al-Zarqawi dismissed al-Maqdisi's concerns and claimed that al-Maqdisi "should have waited until [he] got a more accurate sense of the reality we live with [in Iraq], then [he] could choose whichever theological avenues [he] would like to advise [us] on, and we would employ what is worthy [of his opinions]."[7] Al-Maqdisi's failure to win the debate, much less dissuade al-Zarqawi from his position, landed him back in Jordanian prison on July 5, 2005.

Refuting Martyrdom: Abu Basir al-Tartusi and the Question of Certain Benefit

Al-Maqdisi was not the only jurisconsult to publish criticisms of al-Zarqawi. In a fatwa titled "Mahadhir al-ʿamaliyyat al-istishhadiyya aw intihariyya" ("Cautioning against Martyrdom or Suicide Operations") published on August 24, 2005, Abu Basir al-Tartusi, a Syrian Jihadi-Salafi mufti who would later leave his home in London in 2011 for the rebellion against the Assad government in Syria, passionately critiqued what he considered the excessive use of violence and waste of Muslim youth in martyrdom-seeking operations. For al-Tartusi, "the operation necessitates a man killing himself by his own hand [*qatala al-marʾa li-nafsihi bi-nafsihi*], and this contradicts dozens of legal and jurisprudential texts offering proofs and indications that forbid a man to kill himself."[8] Like the jurists reviewed in chapter 3, al-Tartusi argues that the predominant juridical position on suicide is one of absolute prohibition. Yet those jurists argued that if an individual was possessed of sound intentions toward God, then the martyrdom-seeking operation itself was not an act of suicide. In fact, they argued, it was an act of consecrating

self-renunciation. Disagreeing with them, al-Tartusi set aside the primacy of questions of intentionality in order to critique the permissibility of the tactic as a whole.

Al-Tartusi weighs the balance of the individual believer against the interest of the community of the faithful. Among the lamentable outcomes of martyrdom-seeking operations, al-Tartusi writes, are the deaths of those who are innocent and whom the martyrdom seekers possess no right to kill. The possibility for innocent deaths is multiplied, al-Tartusi writes, with the permissibility that was given by jurists to those needing to strike a human shield (*tatarrus*) in the midst of combat. The striking of human shields, when those it is permissible and not permissible to attack are intermingled, necessitates, al-Tartusi argues, the fulfillment of specific characteristics and conditions. If even one of these conditions is neglected or left unfulfilled, then the legitimacy of the entire operation is rendered null (*bāṭil*). Specifically, al-Tartusi notes that it is permissible to strike a human shield if (1) the only way to repel an enemy assault is by striking in the direction of the human shield and (2) if abstaining from attacking the enemy poses a greater harm to the community than does attacking members of the Muslim community. Such a tactic must be heavily restricted, he writes, "because the principles of the Shariʿa instruct us to reject the greater damage [*al-ḍarrar al-akbar*] for the lesser damage [*al-ḍarrar al-ṣaghīr*], and to prefer the lesser of two evils and corruptions when there is no way to avoid them both."[9] The failure of those such as al-Zarqawi, al-Tartusi suggests, is that they have overgeneralized the criteria necessary for the tactic of martyrdom-seeking operations in favor of battlefield expediencies.

Like his contemporaries, al-Tartusi utilizes the *tafsīr* of al-Qurtubi to negotiate the permissible and impermissible conditions of striking human shields in open combat. For al-Qurtubi, the shield may be struck if the "benefit is necessary, absolute, and certain [*al-maṣlaḥa ḍarūriyya kulliya qaṭʿiyya*]," an apparent nod to the legal framework for *maṣlaḥa mursala* (an unattributed benefit) established by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058–1111), among others.[10] Where al-Tartusi differs from his colleagues is on the precise degree of necessity, absolute knowledge, and certainty necessary for establishing the permissibility of the shield. For al-Tartusi, the proverbial red line to cross prior to allowing such a strike is nearly unattainable. There must be an irrefutable and unassailable certainty that the Muslim community will be destroyed if the shield is not struck, and for him, such a certainty remains a theoretical exercise not yet proved within the contemporary jihad. Without this clear

and apparent assurance of destruction in the contemporary jihad, al-Tartusi argues, the analogy drawn by Jihadi-Salafi jurisconsults from the juridical examples of the human shield found within the consensus of prior jurists does not hold.

Yet, though he is critical of his contemporaries, al-Tartusi does not challenge the overall structure and methodology of their arguments. Like those he critiques, al-Tartusi cites the example of the shield (*tatarrus*) and the example of immersing oneself into the ranks of the enemy (*inghimās*) as necessary propositions of the arguments legitimating the tactic of martyrdom-seeking operations. Underlying both legal questions is the essential role played by the question of common benefit (*maṣlaḥa*)—a concept with which al-Tartusi critiques the contemporary usage of such operations and with which the authors on the Minbar defend the same. The usage of *maṣlaḥa* as a device for legal disputation reveals the subtle legal hermeneutic of the Jihadi-Salafi *minhāj* and the way the renunciant credal positions of the Jihadi-Salafi community have influenced their understanding of legal theory and practice.

Much like the matter of the individual martyr within the operation, there is a spectrum of positions and citations mobilized by the authors on the Minbar to support the permissibility of the tactic of self-immersion into the enemy while seeking martyrdom. Much as on the question of the necessity of self-renunciative intentionality, authors and texts—such as the exegetical writings of al-Qurtubi and the fatwas of Ibn Taymiyya—cited by Jihadi-Salafis provide common points of contact for fatwas that otherwise lack geographic and authorial consistency. Each fatwa works within and through various strands of Sunni Islamic legal theory, creating intersections between the memory of the classical legal tradition and contemporary needs of the community. Together, these intersections help us to trace the gradual creation of an alternative legal methodology outside of the dominant culture of recognized Sunni legal authorities.

Al-Shuʿaybi summarizes this connection of the classical precedents for immersion into the enemy with the contemporary matter of martyrdom-seeking succinctly: "The aspect of martyrdom-seeking [*istishhād*], as related to the question of carrying oneself against a greater enemy and, likewise, immersion [*inghimās*] in the ranks of the enemy while intentionally exposing oneself to harm while on jihad, is applicable to the question of the mujahid who exposes himself to harm, immerses himself into a gathering of disbelievers, and then kills them, causing casualties and trauma."[11]

Al-Zawahiri, writing five years before al-Shuʿaybi, argued that whether one kills oneself by one's own direction, as in the story of the youth and the king, or one kills oneself by one's own actions in combat, as in the case of those undertaking attacks in his example of modern Pakistan, such attacks resemble "carrying oneself against an army of disbelievers . . . and they are laudatory and praiseworthy if they have been undertaken for the general welfare of the religion [*maṣlaḥat al-dīn*] and furthering its prestige."[12] The claim shared by all of the authors is similar: the tactics of self-renunciative martyrdom-seeking operations, which involve the immersion of one individual into an overwhelming mass of the enemy, become legitimate acts of combat provided the immersion will maximize the harm brought against the enemy and disbelievers while preventing the likelihood of greater harm befalling the community, and perhaps even contributing to the broader general benefit of it as well.

Drowning with the Enemy: The Question of Immersion (*Inghimās*)

Unlike the argument establishing martyrdom-seeking as an authentic and legitimate act, the authors on the Minbar established their case for the permissibility of *inghimās* upon very few qurʾanic texts, preferring instead texts drawn from the hadith and from various traditionists, jurists, and exegetes. In part, this is likely because neither the term nor its etymological tripartite root—*gh-m-s*, meaning "to immerse" or "to plunge" in its earliest usage—occurs within the Qurʾan.[13] Instead, the term appears in later legal literature—most notably for Jihadi-Salafis, the two-volume legal manual of narrations and discussion of jihad produced by Ibn al-Nahhas al-Dumyati (d. 1411), *Masharīʿ al-ashwaq ila masariʿ al-ushhaq*. The question of immersion was an early legal question derived, in part, from the precedent of prophetic narrations in which individual fighters would go out against an overwhelming number of the enemy. In their discussion, Jihadi-Salafis are careful to show a wide-ranging set of opinions from across the four major Sunni schools to justify the tactic. With these texts, the majority of Jihadi-Salafi authors on the Minbar—including those aligned with al-Maqdisi and al-Shuʿaybi—argue that immersion is one approach to the tactic of martyrdom-seeking.

Classifying Immersion: Balancing Self-Interest and Community Protection

For al-Shuʿaybi, al-Maqdisi, and al-Binʿali, the issue of *inghimās* occurs in a few short sentences or paragraphs with one or two texts offered in support.[14] Three authors—al-Zawahiri, al-ʿUyayri and Hasan—offer the longest discussions on *inghimās* among their counterparts. Hasan expands on the various dimensions of the question of immersion in battle in four lengthy sections titled, "The Permissibility of Damaging and Destroying Oneself for the Benefit of Strengthening the Religion and Ensuring its Triumph" ("Jawaz ihlak al-nafs wa-itlafuha li-maslahat iʿzaz al-din wa-izharihi"), "The Consensus of the Jurists on the Permissibility of Plunging Oneself into Peril while on Jihad" ("Ijmaʾ al-ʿulamaʾ ʿala jawaz taqahhum al-mahalak fi-l-jihad"), "The Permissibility of Carrying Oneself against a Greater Number of the Enemy while on the Jihad though Destruction Is Certain or Rationally Feasible" ("Jawaz haml al-wahid ʿala al-ʿadad al-kathir min al-ʿadu fi-l-jihad wa-in tayyaqana aw ghalaba ʿala zannihi al-halaka"), and "The Sayings of the Scholars on the Permissibility of Carrying Oneself against a Greater Number though Killing Is Certain" ("Aqwal ahl al-ʿilm fī jawaz haml al-wahid ʿala al-ʿadad al-kathir wa-in tayyaqana al-qatl").[15] All four categories involve a sacrifice of individual interest for communal well-being.

Though none of his contemporaries subdivides the matter of immersion in quite the same fashion, Hasan's classificatory scheme is useful for understanding the different aspects by which the matter of *inghimās* is understood across the various Jihadi-Salafi arguments under consideration here. In part, this is because his approach shows the tie between the two legal arguments—the justification of individual martyrdom-seeking aligned with communal interest. Hasan treats the first section on the permissibility of destroying oneself for the benefit of the faith as a matter involving both the intentionality of the individual seeking martyrdom and a question of the legality of the tactic. The section itself begins with Qurʾan 2:207, the passage about the believer who has sold himself in the cause of God, but it is followed closely by a quotation from *surat al-Burūj* ("The Constellations," Qurʾan 85:4–8): "May they perish, the inhabitants of the pit, the fire well fueled, when they sat by it, and were witness to what they did unto the believers." To explicate this passage, Hasan argues that the qurʾanic exegetes related it to the hadith on the story of the youth—as mentioned in connection with Ibn Taymiyya here and in chapter 3.[16] Al-Zawahiri cites the same

verse and provides the same explanation, accepting the explanation of Ibn Taymiyya cited here.[17] As for the second passage, Hasan relates the love of God that is expected of one undertaking jihad in the path of God.[18] To allow oneself to be immersed within the enemy must, at the very least, be tied to the question of intention.

The third and fourth sections provided by Hasan outline the legal precedence for immersion alongside the legal-historical manifestations of the practice, and it is these sections that closely parallel the work of al-Zawahiri and the other authors on the matter of *inghimās*. All of these attach immersion to tactical and impersonal considerations while carefully tracing arguments justifying its use to the Maliki, Shafiʿi, Hanbali, and Hanafi schools. Often such precedence is established through the additional exegesis of passages already cited to establish the impossibility of a suicide resulting from a martyrdom-seeking operation. Recounting, for example, the hadith cited by Malik, among others, which reveals Muhammad's silent affirmation of the actions of one of the *anṣār*, ʾUmayr bin al-Humam, during the Battle of Badr, Hasan cites the Shafiʿi jurist Abu Zakariyya Muhi al-Din al-Nawawi (1223–1278), who avers that the hadith provides evidence of "the permissibility of self-immersion [*inghimās*] into the disbelievers and a focusing of one's attention on martyrdom—there is no reprehensibility [*karāhiyya*] in the act, which is permissible according to a multitude of scholars."[19] Additional historical figures drawn from the tradition, including al-Baraʾ bin Malik, Salama ibn al-Akwaʿ al-Aslami, Hisham bin ʿAmr al-Ansari, Abu Hadrad al-Aslami, and ʿAbd Allah bin Hanzilat al-Ghasil—all of whom are identified by al-Shuʿaybi as having perished in acts of self-immersion in the face of implausible survival—are cited as primary evidence of the permissibility of the tactic.[20]

Among the more well known of the Shafiʿi scholars cited by the Jihadi-Salafi authors in their defense of immersion is al-Ghazali, whose work "*The Revival of the Religious Sciences*" ("Ihyaʾ ʿUlum al-Din"), was itself not a legal manual but addressed philosophical matters raised by the existence of the divine law itself. The passage cited is lengthy but sounds a familiar refrain:

> There is no disagreement [on the permissibility of] the solitary Muslim who hastens to attack the ranks of the disbelievers, and fights though he knows he will be killed. Likewise, he is permitted to fight the disbelievers

> until he is killed—and that is made permissible by the "command to uphold what is right and forbid what is wrong" [*al-ʿamr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-nahy ʿan al-munkar*]. Yet, if it is known that no harm will result from the attack against the disbelievers, such as a blind or disabled person who carelessly throws himself toward the enemy—such an action is forbidden—and it falls under the auspices of the verse of destruction [Qurʾan 2:195]. The advance [against the enemy] is permissible only if it is known that he will kill before he is killed, or it is known that, once the disbelievers witness his courage, he will shatter their morale [*annahu yaksaru qulūb al-kuffār*], their belief in any possibility for victory over the Muslims will vanish altogether, they will long to attest to the path of God, and their will to fight will be broken by the act.[21]

Al-Ghazali allows the possibility of an immersive attack on the basis of its ensuring the safety of the broader community but conditions his permission on the certain knowledge that catastrophic harm will befall the enemy. Of the Jihadi-Salafi authors citing this passage, only Hasan provides any additional commentary—and he affirms that it clearly demonstrates the permissibility of immersing oneself into the ranks of the enemy while also representing the behavior of one who sells himself desiring the favor of God.[22] To rephrase, Hasan is arguing that this citation, along with the citation of the Zahiri jurist, philosopher, and theologian ʿAli bin Ahmad ibn Hazm (994–1064), which follows the citation of al-Ghazali in his text, outlines the possibility of analogizing a practical manifestation of martyrdom-seeking. Such citations provide to the reader specific rules and guidelines for how to evaluate the utility of a martyrdom-seeking operation by creating evaluative metrics from earlier Islamic juridical debates. One must intend God alone, spending one's life wisely in God's cause, but must also ensure the tactical utility of the attack to the broader *umma*.

Hanafi and Maliki positions are represented in the Jihadi-Salafi texts as well. Either the commentary of the Hanafi scholar Abu Bakr al-Jassas (917–981) or that of the Maliki Cordoban scholar al-Qurtubi (1204–1272), both with *Ahkam al-Qurʾan* in their titles, are cited by Hasan, al-Zawahiri, al-Shuʿaybi, and al-ʿUyayri, among others.[23] The passages cited are part of the exegetical analysis of Qurʾan 2:195: "Spend in the way of God . . . for God loves those who do well." The two analyses presented are almost identical, and this is because of the common source material of each. Both al-Qurtubi

and al-Jassas cite the precedent of Muhammad found within al-Shaybani's *Siyar* for the origin of their position on the matter of throwing oneself against the enemy. Al-Qurtubi writes:

> Were a solitary man to carry himself alone against a thousand disbelieving men, there is nothing objectionable in that if he sought to create secure conditions or damage the enemy. If, however, these are absent, then the action is detestable, because he would have risked his life senselessly and not for any benefit [*manfaʿa*] to the Muslims. Were his objective to encourage Muslims to act in a similar fashion, this would remain permissible. Among the reasons why? This is a benefit for Muslims. If his objective was to terrorize the enemy [*irhāb al-ʿadū*], and to make known the resolve of the Muslims for the faith [*dīn*], this does not eliminate the permissibility [of his act]. If there was in [his act] a benefit for the Muslims, then he risked his life to strengthen the religion and to discourage disbelief. He is a distinguished pillar whom God has lauded to Muslims in His saying: "God has purchased . . . that they might receive Paradise."[24]

The passage concludes with a reference to Qurʾan 9:111—emphasizing the relational exchange that Jihadi-Salafi jurists identify as existing between God and those wishing to step into an always already existent mode of being with the divine. What is left out by the Jihadi-Salafi authors, however, is what connects the thought of al-Jassas, al-Qurtubi, and al-Ghazali on this issue: the matter of commanding what is right and forbidding what is wrong (*al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-nahy ʿan al-munkar*). Immediately following the passage quoted above, al-Qurtubi writes that the one who understands the arrangement that God has lauded is "one who so desires to uphold the judgment on commanding what is right and forbid what is wrong that he, when he desires benefit for the faith, sacrifices himself for it until he is killed."[25] In addition to Qurʾan 9:111, al-Jassas cites Qurʾan 2:207 ("And among mankind is one who sells his soul seeking God's good pleasure"), followed by a similar explanation that the individual acting in this fashion has undertaken to uphold what is lawful and to prohibit what corrupts.[26]

If we accept Gavin Flood's claim that ascetical practice is a form of self-renunciation performing the "memory of tradition," then these citations suggest that immersion within disbelievers while armed with a belt or vehicle packed with explosives serves as an external performance of one's inward devotion to upholding the tradition of the Salaf. Much as the Salaf

sacrificed or "spent" in God's cause to establish the earliest Muslim community, so, too, must those willing Muslims today pay the same transaction. By making such an action manifest, a martyrdom seeker displays a tie between belief and practice that demonstrates the act of pious self-renunciation. Yet something else ties these citations together as well. Hasan, al-Shuʿaybi, al-ʿUyayri, al-Zawahiri, and al-Binʿali all quote from Ibn al-Nahhas. The quotation they provide is a brief affirmation by Ibn al-Nahhas that the hadith he has cited—and which they also cite—is evidence of the permissibility of immersing oneself into a greater number of enemy forces.[27] Additionally, all these quotations from al-Nawawi, al-Qurtubi, al-Jassas, al-Ghazali, and Ibn Taymiyya are contained within this lesser-known but essential fourteenth-century text written by the same Ibn al-Nahhas. The text, a two-volume work in excess of one thousand pages, is a thematic arrangement of narrations and legal discussions from across all four Sunni legal schools, which addresses topics such as fighting at sea, the appropriate division of spoils, the manner by which an imam may call for combat, the question of the human shield and the use of mangonels, and the question of immersion. Ibn al-Nahhas lived along the Egyptian coast, where he fought incursions of crusading forces throughout his life. The entirety of his work is featured on the Minbar in a digital edition edited by Salah ʿAbd al-Fattah al-Khalidi and stamped with one of the numerous logos of the Minbar. In his introduction to the text, al-Khalidi writes that at a time when Muslims are shedding blood in lands as varied as Ethiopia, Pakistan, Albania, Chechnya, Dagestan, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, "the battlefront of jihad will remain deeply integral to the existence of the Muslim *umma*."[28] Equally, Anwar al-ʿAwlaki, using the text of al-Khalidi, which he translated into English, delivered a series of lectures covering ten recordings on Ibn al-Nahhas's text in which he discusses the importance of Ibn al-Mubarak's renunciative ideals of jihad to the former's arguments for its necessity.[29]

Ibn al-Nahhas's commentary on jihad rests amid two possible positions. The first, that of Ibn al-Mubarak, viewed jihad as a radically individualized act undertaken out of devotion to God. On the other side rests Abu al-Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad Ibn Rushd's (1058/9–1126) view of jihad as a form of warfare characterized by an ordered mode of combat that was guided with sound political and religious leadership. Ibn al-Nahhas understood jihad as a communal obligation that needed to be observed at least once yearly.[30] However, he also considered jihad to be the most loved of human works by God and the mujahid to be the most favored from among all of the believing

peoples, a position he based, in part, on his citation of narrations from Ibn al-Mubarak's *Kitab al-Jihad*.[31] Throughout, Ibn al-Nahhas draws on works from all four schools of the Sunni legal tradition as well as from unaffiliated figures such as Ibn al-Mubarak to provide a broad spectrum of opinions on the sensibility of jihad with minimal analysis. What he does provide to Jihadi-Salafis is a well-organized but broadly conceived set of textual evidence from which they are able to identify passages related, at least superficially, to their circumstances. Upon Ibn al-Nahhas's text, Jihadi-Salafis build the pious self-renunciation of a martyrdom within the pursuit of physical combat—both self-immersion into the enemy and the question of the need to attack the innocent.

To Kill the Innocent: The Question of the Shield (*Tatarrus*)

The cited examples of immersions within enemy armies are not represented here comprehensively. The frequency and volume with which Jihadi-Salafi jurists cite such examples convey the breadth of eras from which the jurists construct their understanding of a tradition of self-immersion in the enemy. With all of these examples, however, the jurists leave it to their audience to provide explicit commentary. By placing these fatwas in conversation with one another—as a series of conversations on law and tradition—several themes emerge: the necessity of placing the common welfare (*maṣlaḥa*) ahead of oneself, of fighting to uphold the imperative to maintain what is right and lawful and denounce what is unlawful, and the observation that an individual should have some certainty of the effective outcome of the immersion. With each repeated citation from across various eras of Islamic legal interpretation, the Jihadi-Salafi jurists almost overwhelm the reader with a perceived permissibility of martyrdom-seeking.

Yet, as has been noted earlier, these fatwas do not constitute a singular discourse so much as they exist as what Michel Foucault labels "discursive formations" characterized by their ruptures and disagreements as much as their systematic agreement.[32] They do not share, for example, the exact same citations in the exact same order with the exact same reasoning. This breadth and disunity have often led to numerous criticisms of the Jihadi-Salafi *minhāj* as suffering from a shallow hermeneutic, an unhealthy and nefarious stretching of tradition past the boundaries to which it had been restricted for

millennia, and—perhaps the sharpest critique of all—a willful abuse of tradition for the purposes of the infliction of naked human power and violence. In a short essay titled "Islam and the Theology of Power," Khaled Abou El Fadl described the arguments legitimating contemporary acts of terrorism, such as those acts undertaken by Jihadi-Salafi agents, as the product of an egalitarian theological orientation that is "dismissive of all moral norms or ethical values . . . [whose] nearly singular concern is power and its symbols."[33] From this position, it follows that the breadth of citation is evidence of the shallowness of the Jihadi-Salafi *minhāj*. Rather than advancing unique or original argumentation, the argument states, the authors simply try to overwhelm the reader with a selective reading that assists only their overall objectives.

Assessing the Depth of Jihadi-Salafi Legal Reasoning for Martyrdom-Seeking: Legal Methodology or Legal Cynicism?

Such critiques could certainly be leveled here. The passage quoted from al-Ghazali's *Ihyaʾ*, for example, seems a minor point made in the nineteenth book on the topic of enjoining good and forbidding evil (*al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-nahy ʿan al-munkar*) as part of a philosophical exploration of the limits of the law. The specific section within which the discussion of immersion occurs is in a discussion of the fifth condition, "power," which is the fifth of the necessary conditions of the first component necessary to uphold the duty to enjoin good and forbid evil. The general concept upon which al-Ghazali establishes the duty is *ḥisba*, which Michael Cook argues is never effectively defined by al-Ghazali himself but seems to carry within it the semantic meaning of "doing something for God's sake, without personal or worldly motives of any kind."[34] For the duty to be upheld, al-Ghazali argues that there are four components that must work in concert: the person who does it (*al-muḥtasib*), the person against whom it is done (*al-muḥtasab ʿalayhi*), the matter regarding which it is done (*al-muḥtasab fīhi*), and the actual process of doing it (*nafs al-iḥtisāb*).[35] The condition of power is the fifth condition necessary for the *muḥtasib* to possess. Al-Ghazali affirms that at periodic moments throughout the duration of one's obligation to uphold the law, one may in fact be faced with harm, but, much like the mujahid who abandons himself to an overwhelming certainty of self-destruction to bring about the safety of the community, so, too, may an individual upholding the law expose

himself to harm for the sake of God.[36] Al-Ghazali argues that if in upholding the good or preventing evil, harm will befall others, it may be necessary to avoid the action altogether—which would be a very strong critique against the Jihadi-Salafi position on immersion specifically and martyrdom-seeking operations generally. However, al-Ghazali suggests that these are matters of law (*masāʾil fiqhiyya*) on which only speculative positions may be reached. In a nod, perhaps, toward his discussions of *maṣlaḥa* and the objectives of the law (*maqāṣid al-Sharīʿa*), he concludes that the degrees of harm (*darajāt al-munkar*) must be taken into account between two possible actions.[37]

What appears to be an arbitrary mention of al-Ghazali becomes more productive if it is not read merely as a legal precedent but instead as an indicant for the possibility of discerning Jihadi-Salafi legal hermeneutics. It must be stressed here that this is not to say that al-Ghazali would approve of martyrdom-seeking operations, but it does demonstrate that the interpretative space within which Jihadi-Salafis are able to function is flexible enough to extend beyond mere legal analogy. As was shown in chapter 2, Jihadi-Salafis claim that there is a meaningful relationship in the conceptual vocabularies of *al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ* and *al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-nahy ʿan al-munkar*. Yet such an affinity reveals scant few details on the method, the *minhāj*, used by the Jihadi-Salafis in their arguments for immersion and martyrdom-seeking operations more generally.

For some critics, this suggests that there is no systematic aspect to Jihadi-Salafi legal interpretation in any fashion. As one of very few researchers to have considered Jihadi-Salafi appropriations of *inghimās*, Rebecca Molloy argues that "jihadist ideologues have manipulated Ibn Taymiyya's use of the term *inghimās* in an attempt to justify suicide bombing tactics. Their interpretation has not been derived in accordance with appropriate Sharīʿa procedure, and it does not override explicit qurʾanic and legal texts prohibiting suicide."[38] The claim that the Jihadi-Salafi authors do not address the explicit qurʾanic legal texts addressing suicide seems untenable, given the discussions shown in chapter 3. Also problematic is the claim that the Jihadi-Salafi authors do not follow correct Shariʿa procedure—especially since Molloy does not outline precisely what this procedure must be.

To claim that Jihadi-Salafi authors select texts from the tradition based on a simple analogy, lacking any form of methodological rigor, much less any sort of identifiable legal hermeneutics, reduces Jihadi-Salafi jurisprudence to a mere exercise of convenience or, more cynically, self-willed legal interpretation. Texts, it is said, are selected and cited based on whether they

fit the particular needs of the author's agenda. Even if, as Molloy contends, Ibn Taymiyya allowed for the arguments of *inghimās* advanced by the Jihadi-Salafis, he would not have supported martyrdom-seeking operations generally because he would not have tolerated the collateral deaths of noncombatants. Molloy, however, like many who share her contention that Jihadi-Salafi authors use an "evasive legal device" to form their arguments, does so for the purposes of discrediting and disproving the Jihadi-Salafi movement as a whole and, therefore, works to disclaim and discount Jihadi-Salafi arguments and positions.[39] To support her contention, she outlines what she labels the "false premises" of their "categorical syllogism":

a. [All endangering] oneself to harm the enemy is permissible.
b. Endangering oneself by *inghimās* includes taking one's own life.
c. Definition of enemy includes Sharīʿa protected groups.
d. Therefore, taking one's own life to harm Sharīʿa protected groups is permissible *inghimās*.[40]

Molloy allows that the legal tradition permits endangering oneself to inflict harm on the enemy, but she maintains that martyrdom-seeking operations have in no way inflicted the sort of decisive repulsion that Jihadi-Salafis have hoped for. Further, she claims, "in the more acceptable 'suicide missions,' one dies at the hands of the enemy, not by one's own doing"—and it is on this final point, she writes, that the Jihadi-Salafi authors lack a clear rationale (*ʿilla*) connecting the classical cases to the contemporary circumstance. Yet, as we saw in chapter 3, an *ʿilla* is not a mere direct analogy but rather the essential reason for a particular ruling—it is a general legal principle that may be transferred across contexts.

The *ʿilla*, in the precepts Molloy offers, would be the rationale underlying why it is permissible to endanger oneself in the first place. Further, in his aforementioned treatise on *inghimās*, which Molloy uses to establish her case against the Jihadi-Salafis, Ibn Taymiyya is not authoring a fatwa and therefore does not make mention of an *ʿilla*—he is instead offering the *adilla*, the textual evidence, for whether the tactic was permissible in prior contexts. It is difficult, then, to see how Molloy has proved her case that the Jihadi-Salafis have not established an *ʿilla* when her claim lacks an identification of any sort of *ʿilla* offered by Ibn Taymiyya and the Jihadi-Salafis. Rather than allowing the totality of their work to become present, Molloy hastens to find the Jihadi-Salafi position untenable and label the Jihadi-Salafis as brigands

(*muhāribūn*), which within classical law is a grave criminal offense, while placing them among those who "have blurred the line within Islamic law between bravery and anti-Sharīʿa, deviant behavior."[41] This is a strong condemnation and echoes that made by Abou El Fadl.

Yet the matter of *inghimās* is one half of the tactical argument for martyrdom-seeking operations advanced by Jihadi-Salafi authors. Without the matter of the shield (*tatarrus*), the other half of the argument, the ʿ*illa* established by Jihadi-Salafi authors connecting classical and medieval textual evidence with the contemporary question of martyrdom-seeking operations, remains incomplete. Molloy is correct that, generally speaking, the question of *inghimās* is a question of throwing oneself into a circumstance where one's death is brought by the hands of one's enemies. With the question of the shield, however, the death of combatants and noncombatants alike occurs by means of weapons under the control and operation of Muslim armies. To understand the ʿ*illa* identified by Jihadi-Salafi muftis as connecting the classical and medieval evidence with the new contemporary circumstance, it is necessary to understand how *inghimās* and *tatarrus* operate in tandem with each other.

Classifying the Shield: Balancing Community Protection and the Death of the Innocent

Among the numerous propositions faced by attacking and defending combatants, few pose legal, ethical, and philosophical questions as broadly as do the questions of human shields in combat. A defending army, by taking noncombatants—the elderly, the infirm, women, children, or prisoners of war—to nullify the will or capacity of an enemy force to strike a valuable or essential target reduces them to a base instrumentality and strips them of both legal status and, quite possibly, the essential worth of their humanity. The last statement is not hyperbole—an attacking army, when presented with an objective guarded by a human shield, must measure the value of capturing or destroying the objective against the inherent value and worth of the humans used to guard it, and at times, the decision is made that striking at the enemy, with the risk of killing innocent noncombatants, is of higher utility than not doing so. In their fatwas and legal writings, the Jihadi-Salafi authors on the Minbar—of whom the paradigmatic cases seem to be al-Zawahiri's "Shifāʾ" and Abu Yahya al-Libi's "Al-Tatarrus"—consider their position on

the question of *tatarrus* to be a moderate position, one that supports the striking of the human shield in some, but not all, circumstances.

Al-Zawahiri addresses the question of striking at the human shield following his lengthy consideration of the permissibility of martyrdom-seeking operations as a whole. The question of whether it is permissible to strike at disbelievers when there are those whom it is not permissible to kill mixed among them has been addressed along three lines of inquiry. The first, that it is forbidden to strike at the human shield at all, is the opinion, he suggests, of Malik and Abu ʿAmr ʿabd al-Rahman bin ʿAmr al-Awzaʾi (707–774), but he notes that later Malikis, in particular al-Qurtubi, disagree with the founder of their *madhhab*.[42] Al-Zawahiri, for his part, identifies with the group of those who approve striking at the enemy surrounded by a human shield, regardless of the presence of noncombatants or Muslims—and this, in his estimation, is the position of Hanafi scholars and some later Malikis.[43] Al-Zawahiri identifies the final position as "permitting the bombardment, under specific circumstances, of the *kuffār*, those Muslims mixed within them, and those among the *kuffār* whom it is forbidden to kill," and this position is taken by the scholars in the Shafiʿi and Hanbali schools.[44] The third position, al-Zawahiri claims, is the most moderate because it demands that there be a clear necessity (*ḍarūra*) or need (*ḥāja*) present for the Muslim community to do this. To these lines of inquiry, al-Libi adds the question of Muslim merchants or noncombatants who either are unable to leave the city or have refused to leave the city and abandon their property—but this, he writes, is typically a question of an offensive jihad.[45]

Unlike the arguments seen in chapter 3, the arguments related to *tatarrus* are not established not upon passages from the Qurʾan, hadith, or prophetic biographies but instead from evidence derived across the four Sunni schools of legal thought. Al-Libi accounts for this absence by suggesting that the matter of the shield occurred after the period of Muhammad and the companions and arose in the midst of the expansion of the Islamic state.[46] This represents one of the earlier Jihadi-Salafi connections of the necessity of the tactic of martyrdom-seeking operations to the creation of a "state" (*dawla*). What is established on the precedent of the narrations, however, are two secondary pieces of evidence: the approved use of mangonels against the people of al-Taʾif by Muhammad and the companions and the approval of night raids (*bayāt*) against the enemy.[47]

The tripartite structure outlined by al-Zawahiri is not unique to Jihadi-Salafi discussions, and it possesses similarities with several published texts

on the matter of the shield. One such text is a brief treatise titled "Al-Qawl al-mubayyin fi mafhum al-tatarrus wa-ahkamuhu fi al-din" ("The Explanatory Discussion on the Understanding of Human Shields and Rulings on It in the Religion"). Like a few others, this text on the Minbar was not penned by a Jihadi-Salafi author. On the website, all traces of authorship have been removed, but elsewhere the document is attributed to ʿUmar Ghani Saʿud al-ʿAni, an Iraqi professor who disappeared in the midst of the Battle of Fallujah in 2004. Although none of the fatwas makes specific reference to the text, they do share with it several of the same citations on the matter of the shield. After a brief excursus on the various dictionary and lexicographical definition of *tatarrus*, al-ʿAni suggests his own: "The enemy protecting itself with the sacrosanct blood or property, in order to prevent Muslims from attacking enemy forces."[48]

Al-ʿAni, along with Ahmed Al-Dawoody, in his *Islamic Law of War*, argues that in the longer historical narratives, the question of *tatarrus* in the medieval Islamic context typically involved an enemy army capturing a town and surrounding the town with noncombatants. Rather than launching an attack using armed foot soldiers, the Muslim army would instead turn to its mangonels (*manjanīq*), weapons designed for catapulting stones for substantial distances against armed fortifications. Of course, even given a reasonable measure of mathematical measurement, flinging a heavy stone several hundred meters often incurs the possibility for substantial inaccuracy, a problem compounded by the presence of innocent noncombatants. As Dawoody observes, most, but not all, jurists, in the course of answering the question, subdivided the matter according to whom the enemy army uses as a shield: if they are considered among typical noncombatants (women, the aged, and children), if they are Muslims or Muslim prisoners of war, or if they are considered to have protected status (*ahl al-dhimmī, mustaʾmin*).[49] To these questions, al-ʿAni adds that of whether the enemy uses the property (*māl*) of Muslims as a shield.[50]

Both al-ʿAni and Dawoody agree that the preponderant opinion across the four schools is one that favors striking the shield assuming the fulfillment of certain conditions. Based on his readings of Abu Hanifa, Ibn al-Hudhayl al-Hanafi, Sufyan al-Thawri (715/16 – 778), Abu Yusuf al-Shaybani, al-Shafiʾi, Ibn Hanbal, Abu Ibrahim Ismail bin Yahya al-Muzani (791/92 – 877), al-Qurtubi, Abu Bakr bin Ahmad al-Jassas (917–981), al-Ghazali, Abu Muhammad al-Husayn al-Baghawi (1044? – 1122), and Kamal Ibnal-Humam (1388? – 1457), al-ʿAni concludes that striking

the shield is permissible "when there is an anticipated common benefit [*maṣlaḥa marjawa*] or an urgent need [*ḍarūra muliḥḥa*] to defend the Muslim army from the danger of a defeat that—perhaps—will open Muslim lands to violent conquest and will allow for the capture of Muslim men, women, and children."[51] According to al-ʿAni, without both *ḍarūra* and *maṣlaḥa*, the permissibility of the action remains incomplete. Further, the action is also impermissible if it is not overseen by either a commander or head of the armed forces able to identify and make a tactical appraisal of the shield.[52] While Dawoody does argue for the preponderant opinion, he does not establish his own clear legal position. Instead, he contends that the matter of the shield is a reflection of the substantial juridical diversity that often typifies complex Islamic legal questions and therefore "must be left to the Muslims in question to decide which rulings to endorse."[53] As Dawoody and al-Zawahiri observe independently of each other, there is a lack of juridical consensus on the question of striking at an enemy behind a human shield. This variance of juridical opinion creates what seems at first to be an unresolvable dilemma for Jihadi-Salafis: if the earliest jurists, and their later interlocutors, are in disagreement about whether the shield should be struck, how, then, should one act now, in the face of this apparent and exceptional danger? To resolve the tensions among the varying opinions, al-Zawahiri and several of his counterparts trace the general outlines of the various positions on the matter and, finally, identify which opinion they consider preponderant (*rājiḥ*) for the contemporary circumstances at hand.

Al-Zawahiri identifies Anas ibn Malik and al-Awzaʿi as leading the principled opposition to the striking of the shield if there is no obvious necessity (*ḍarūra*), and in his own analysis, al-ʿAni adds to this list Al-Layth ibn Saʿd (713–791), Al-Qaffal al-Shashi (903–976), al-Baghawi, al-Nawawi, Ibn Qudama, and Al-Khatib al-Shirbini (d. 1570).[54] The positions of Malik and al-Awzaʾi are established by al-Zawahiri through the exegeses of al-Qurtubi and Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn ʿabd Allah Ibn al-ʿArabi (1076–1148), the traditionists, on Qurʾan 48:25:

> It is they who disbelieved and turned you from the Sacred Mosque and the offerings detained from reaching their place of sacrifice. And were it not for believing men and believing women whom you know not, lest you trample them, and thus incur guilt [*maʿarra*] unknowingly—that God may cause whomsoever He will to enter into his mercy—had they been

> clearly separated, We would surely have punished the disbelievers among them with a painful punishment.[55]

Al-Qurtubi recordsfrom Abu Zayd a passage from ʿAbd al-Rahman ibn al-Qassim (750 – 806), who claimed to have heard Malik say, when asked about whether it was appropriate to strike disbelievers in their warships if they were in possession of Muslims prisoners, "No, I do not think so because, as God Almighty said to the people of Mecca: 'If there had not been among them. . . .' And, likewise, if a disbeliever shields himself with a Muslim, it is not permitted to strike him. Whoever does so, and slaughters a Muslim, must pay *diya* and *kaffāra*."[56] Ibn al-ʿArabi adds that in the aforementioned situation in Constantinople, Malik advised Muslim soldiers not to fire upon Muslim prisoners, though the water they obtained abetted the enemy.[57] This observation leads al-Zawahiri into a legal detour to a side question: the payment of blood money (*diya*). Although there is no evidence to indicate that al-Qaʿida or its co-belligerents have ever paid (or offered to pay) *diya* to those innocents they have harmed, there is another possible reason he speculates on its payment. The consideration of financial restitution ties martyrdom-seeking operations to the legal questions of murder, to the question of public welfare, and to the question of victim restitution.

At What Cost? The Question of Blood Money (*Diya*)

Financial compensation for damages ("blood money," or *diya*) and expiatory acts of restitution and remission for sin (*kaffāra*) together form one means by which Islamic positive law (*fiqh*) ensures the restoration of a just and equitable order following an accidental or intentional act of injustice. In this instance, if Muslims are killed in the course of attacking the shield—or if a mixed crowd of friend and foe is attacked and destroyed—then the payment of restitution is necessary. For Malik, in al-Zawahiri's citation, avoiding attacking the shield or an intermingled population obviates the necessity and obligation of owing *kaffāra* or *diya*, and since one would otherwise seek to avoid any other action requiring one to pay restitution, he considers avoiding what is harmful in this instance to be preferable to undertaking the act of harm itself. Further, Zawahiri's citation of the Qurʾan appears to reinforce Malik's position. The Qurʾan is very clear on the matter of committing homicide against another Muslim:

> It is not for a believer to slay a believer, unless it be in error. Whosoever has slain a believer in error, let him set free a believing slave and pay compensation to the victim's family, unless they remit it in charity. If he belonged to a people at war with you, but was a believer, then a believing slave is to be set free. And if he belonged to a people with whom you have a covenant, let him pay compensation to the victim's family, and let him set free a believing slave. Whosoever finds not [the means], let him fast two consecutive months as a penance from God [*tawba min Allāh*]. . . . \Whosoever slays a believer willfully, his recompense is Hell, abiding therein, God is wroth with him, and curses him, and prepares for him a mighty punishment.[58]

The intentional murder of a Muslim carries with it substantial mortal and eternal consequences for the murderer, as this passage suggests. Of course, not all murders are intentional. Beyond the question of the shield, Muslim jurists have subdivided homicide into four categories: intentional (*qatl ʿamd*); semi-intentional (*qatl shibh ʿamd*), accidental (*qatl khaṭaʾ*), and indirect (*qatl bi-sabab*).[59] What is essential to assessing the penalty for all four categories, as Paul Powers has argued, is not the observation of the murderer's internalized subjectivity but rather the identifiable objective criteria that testify to the subjectivity of the murder. The jurists, Powers suggests, "describe this as an investigation of exactly what instrument was used, where on the victim's body the injury was rendered, the material and social context in which the act occurred, and the like."[60] Malik's prohibition of striking the shield is a response to the act, the instruments—the arrows, mangonels, and other ranged weapons—used for the act, and the consequences wrought by the act itself.

Several of those who would permit the striking of the shield do not necessarily absolve the attacking soldier or army of culpability and do not provide a pardon for the action. That the punishment of retaliation, *qiṣāṣ*, is not included in these conversations indicates that the striking of the shield is established by most of these jurists as a qualified case of accidental homicide wherein one intends neither to strike another Muslim nor to kill him or her—and indicates why most of the debate is on the matters of *kaffāra* and *diya*.[61] Al-Zawahiri identifies several Maliki, Hanafi, and Shafiʿi scholars who support the striking of the shield, all of whom debate the matter of *diya* or *kaffāra* depending on the circumstances of the act. Al-Shafiʿi himself, in *Al-Umm*, notes his disagreement with Malik and states that if one had foreknowledge of Muslims mixed within enemy forces, attacked regardless, and

accidentally struck a Muslim in the midst of the enemy, then upon the attacker would be the obligation to pay the *diya* and offer *kaffāra*. However, if the attacker struck at an amassed or entrenched enemy and killed within them a Muslim of whom he had no foreknowledge, then he would be required to render the *kaffāra* but not the *diya*.[62] No matter the outcome, al-Shafiʿi appears to insist upon some form of restitution.

The relationship between *diya* and *kaffāra* reveals an added dimension to the establishment of criminal liability on the matter of the shield. While *diya* is a form of financial compensation, *kaffāra* is a form of spiritual restitution rendered by the culpable believer to amend debts owed to the community and also owed against the divine judgment of God. The jurists debating the matter of the shield differed on both the social and the political aspects of this act: does one owe the family of the innocent Muslim harmed in the attack, does one owe God for taking the life of a believer, or both? Al-Jassas, the Hanafi scholar whom al-Zawahiri cites, writes that the uncertainty on the matter of restitution arises, according to many exegetes, from the meaning of the word *maʿarra*: "It was narrated on the authority of Ibn Ishaq that [the term] warrants the payment of *diya* while others say *kaffāra*. Some have said that it results in sorrow for having killed a Muslim by one's own hand—because a true believer will bereave that action, even if it was unintentional [*lam yaqṣudhu*]. Others add that it results in shame [*ʿayb*]. And still more add that *maʿarra* means sin [*ithim*], but this is false because the Almighty says it was done 'unknowingly.'"[63] The categories outlined by al-Jassas seem to challenge Powers's estimation that the subjective intentionality of the agent involved in an act of homicide is established by jurists upon objective criteria. Further, given the importance of subjective intentionality to the individual enacting a martyrdom-seeking operation, it would seem that once again, one's subjective intentionality—the guilt one feels for striking the human shield—is pivotal to understanding the permissibility of striking the shield and any possible social or soteriological obligations necessitated.

The text by al-ʿAni would seem to complicate this matter further. Al-ʿAni, citing the precedent of al-Shafiʿi's *Al-Umm*, writes that "if a Muslim strikes the shield, then he must intend striking the ranks of the enemy, because if he does not intend that, or he intends striking the Muslim [within the shield], then he will have full liability [*ḍamān*] . . . were he to not strike [the shield] out of necessity [*ḍarūra*], while knowing that there was a Muslim in the shield, then he would deserve retalitatory punishment (*qiṣāṣ*)."[64] This statement establishes two principles. First, one may not strike at the shield with

the objective of eliminating what the enemy assumes you will not strike: the innocent individuals constituting the shield. This is similar to a hostage situation in which the hostage is shot to remove the barricade between the attacker and the hostage taker. Second, one may only strike at the shield if there is an imminent necessity. If one knows that the shield has a Muslim within it and one strikes the shield absent this imminent threat, then one becomes guilty of intentional homicide and may be culpable—if not executed—for one's actions.

For the Jihadi-Salafi authors on the Minbar, *qiṣāṣ, diya*, and *kaffāra* are not considered obligatory for those who kill Muslims with martyrdom-seeking operations. In other words, those who have unintentionally killed Muslims are not culpable for murder. However, it is not the intentionality of the individual undertaking the operation that grounds the permissibility of the tactic. Two fatwas posted to the Minbar, one by Hamid bin ʿAbd Allah al-ʿAli and the other by ʿAbd al-Rahman bin Talaʾ al-Mukhlif, address (respectively) the necessity of *diya* and *kuffāra* if a Muslim is accidentally killed in the midst of occupying forces (*al-kuffār al-muḥtalīn*) and whether the guardian of an individual involved in a martyrdom-seeking operation is responsible for either *diya* or *kaffāra*. While al-ʿAli indicates that one who kills a Muslim in an explosion (*qutila muslim fī al-tafjīr*) with foreknowledge of the presence of that Muslim must undertake *kaffāra*, he does not demand that *diya* be paid, and he qualifies the necessity of the *kaffāra*.[65] Citing the precedent of the Hanafis, al-ʿAli argues that *kaffāra* and *diya* are not necessitated by acts of jihad because jihad is a duty (*farḍ*) with which damages (*ghamarāt*) are not necessarily interrelated, and, pushing the point further, the payment of damages may in fact interfere with the observance of the requisite duty.[66] Further, if the Muslim who was killed was found to have cooperated with the occupying forces in any manner—such as acting as a police officer or even advancing opinions on matters of policy—then, for al-ʿAli, this was an outward sign that he became a legitimate target of jihad, and the necessity for *kaffāra* was lifted.[67] Agreeing with what he calls the Hanafi position, if the Muslim was part of a shield, then al-ʿAli declares there is no need to pay either *kaffāra* or *diya*.[68]

Al-Mukhlif agrees with al-ʿAli's qualification but provides a much lengthier response to the question of whether the obligation for either *diya* or *kaffāra* is transferred to the legal guardian of the individual who undertook a martyrdom-seeking operation. The contemporary jihad against the disbelievers, al-Mukhlif argues, is a defensive jihad incumbent upon

all believers, waged upon Muslim lands, and given these criteria and the relative lack of finances available to the mujahidin in a time of war, there is no expectation for them to pay the full *diya* to any individuals accidentally killed in a martyrdom-seeking operation.[69] The families who have lost a relative in such an explosion, those to whom the *diya* would be paid, have, al-Mukhlif contends, spent of their wealth in a way that they may have not anticipated but in a manner that fulfills the obligation of a necessary defensive jihad. Thus, while the *diya* may have been required in the classical period, in the contemporary period, al-Mukhlif concludes, *diya* should be paid once the concerns and abilities of the mujahidin to wage war have been met.

Although neither states the matter explicitly, both arguments reveal the essential role played by the state of emergency and the concept of utility (*maṣlaḥa*) in the Jihadi-Salafi understanding of the matter of the shield. Unlike the first two views listed earlier, which demand either no attack or an attack and required reparation, al-Zawahiri argues, the third position, which he favors, places conditions specific to context on the use of the tactic but permits the striking of an intermingled population of disbelievers, Muslims, and those within each community whom it is forbidden to kill, such as women and children. Al-Zawahiri identifies two schools in particular, the Hanbali and the Shafiʿi, as emblematic of this view:

> The Shāfiʿi and the Hanbali schools are those which say that it is not impermissible to strike [the shield] as long as there is a need or obligation to do so on behalf of the Muslims and the Muslims are not the intended target . . . because [not doing so] will lead to the obstruction of jihad.[70]

As we saw, al-Shafiʿi still maintained the necessity of some form of *diya* or *kaffāra*, and al-Zawahiri sees his position as one included by various jurists in either the second or the third group. While this might initially seem inconsistent, al-Zawahiri attempts to rehabilitate al-Shafiʿi with the Hanbali group, to be cover here later, by suggesting that al-Shafiʿi alters his position on the conditions and consequences for striking the shield on the basis of context. Based on the citations he provides from al-Shafiʿi's *Al-Umm*, al-Zawahiri believes that the necessity of offering *diya* and *kaffāra* is part of an offensive jihad, while the condition of a defensive jihad lifts such a requirement because of the nature of the state of emergency entailed by a defensive jihad.[71] This is a position, al-Zawahiri claims, shared by Ahmad ibn

ʿAbd Allah al-Mardawi al-Hanbali (1414–1480), Ibn al-Qudama al-Maqdisi (1147–1223), and, perhaps most famously, Ibn Taymiyya.

This digression by these Jihadi-Salafi authors into the question of the weight of the obligation of restitution unveils to us another dimension of their arguments for jihad as a defensive struggle. While it is living in a state of emergency, they argue, the preponderant attitude of the community must be upon repelling the invader, not concerning itself with the immediate financial burden of restitution. Implicitly, the argument presented seems to be a proposed trade with the communities that Jihadi-Salafis claim they defend: accept some death and suffering now in order that the struggle against the disbeliever may provide you with the joys of a free life of belief later.

Culpability and Striking the Shield: Balancing Certainty in a Jihadi-Salafi Jihad

In addition to permitting the immersion of one Muslim into the ranks of a seemingly insurmountable enemy force, Ibn Taymiyya also permitted striking of the shield in the course of waging a defensive jihad—a theme explored by al-Libi in a lengthy treatise on the question of the human shield. Answering yet another question on the matter of the invading Mongols (Tattār), Ibn Taymiyya writes that the jihad against them is made necessary (*wājib*) on the basis of Qurʾan 8:39: "And fight them until there is no strife [*fitna*] and all of the religious observance [*dīn*] is for God." The Mongols, as he contended on the matter of *inghimās*, had failed to establish fully the foundational necessities of Islamic belief and practice and were therefore similar to the people of al-Taʾif, who, "when they entered into Islam, made requisite praying and fasting, but failed to cease charging interest [*ribā*]."[72] As a result of their failure to establish the totality of the law, Ibn Taymiyya contends, "the scholars of the Muslims have agreed . . . that if [the community] abstains from observing some of the duties of Islām . . . then it is necessary to fight it. If they testify that there is only one God and that Muhammad is His messenger, but abstain from prayer, paying the *zakat*, fasting during the month of Ramadan, making the Hajj to the Ancient Mosque, determining laws on the basis of the Qurʾan and Sunna . . . or occupy their lives and property with what is unjust . . . then they are to be fought until all religious observance is

for God."[73] The obligation to fight was directly tied to the Mongol hegemony within the lands of Islam and had as its objective the restoration and preservation of Islamic law and religious practice.

Ibn Taymiyya tied the permissibility of striking the shield to the urgent necessity of a defensive jihad against the Mongols. The jurists who permitted striking a human shield composed of Muslim captives, he wrote, did so out of fear that not doing so would result in greater harm to the Muslim community. In each case of striking the shield, Ibn Taymiyya maintains, citing an analogue in a sound hadith of Umm Salma from Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, the attacker will be judged according to his intentions (*niyyatuhu*) for striking the shield and therefore must be careful in selecting his or her targets.[74] If any Muslims within the shield were harmed as a result of the attack, then there could be either of two positions held by the scholars. First, the Muslims who were killed were considered martyrs, and this, Ibn Taymiyya states, is further evidence for striking the shield, because "one does not abandon the obligatory jihad because those killed are martyrs."[75] Second, and extending further into the battle, those Muslims who are killed in the course of fighting are counted among the martyrs alongside those of the shield who were unseen by the attackers but killed—the latter, he states specifically, died for the benefit of Islam (*maṣlaḥat al-Islām*).[76] Thus, for Ibn Taymiyya, those whom it is reprehensible (*makruh*) but not prohibited to kill—those powerless to fight such as convicts and those such as women, children, the advanced in age, and monks—may be killed because they will die as martyrs sacrificed for the benefit of Islam.[77]

The idea of a preponderant benefit to striking the shield is shared with Ibn Taymiyya by other jurists. As was seen in the critique of al-Tartusi, al-Qurtubi, in his *Aḥkām*, allows for the striking of the shield provided there is a necessary, absolute, and certain benefit. Al-Qurtubi qualifies the meaning of each of these:

> What is meant by "necessary" [*ḍarūra*] is that there is no other means to attack the disbelievers save by attacking the shield. The meaning of "absolute" [*kulliyya*] is that it is categorical for the entire *umma*—such that by striking the shield a benefit [*maṣlaḥa*] is brought to all of the Muslims. Otherwise, if the shield is not struck, the disbelievers will kill those in the shield and will then take possession of the entire *umma*. The meaning of certainty [*qaṭʿiyya*] is that the benefit is categorical—meaning that in killing the shield there is a benefit for the remaining Muslims.[78]

Al-Nawawi holds a similar opinion, as do Ibn Qudama and, in the contemporary period, Muhammad Amin bin ʿUmar Ibn ʿAbidin (1784–1842), al-Mardawi al-Hanbali, and al-Shawkani.[79] One of the lengthier explorations of the matter comes from al-Ghazali, who relates the question of the shield to the question of using *ijtihād* to ensure the protection of what he considers the five objectives of the law (*maqāṣid al-Sharīʿa*), which he lists as religion (*dīn*), life (*nafs*), lineage (*nasb*), reason (*ʿaql*), and property (*māl*). For al-Ghazali, the question of the shield—much like the question of immersion—is one of measuring the relative benefit of an action. Taking a position that parallels that of al-Qurtubi, al-Ghazali argues that if the shield is not struck, then the community may open itself to the possibility of overwhelming violence, yet "if we strike the shield, then we will kill an innocent Muslim who has committed no offense—but this has no clear tie to Islamic law. However, by not striking, we would empower the disbelievers . . . and they would eventually kill the shield anyway."[80] Al-Ghazali establishes a precedent that allows for the striking of the shield on the basis of its being a minimization of harm and a maximization of benefit to the broader community. In other words, it is an application of the theoretical position to always enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong.

The conditionality of the utility of striking the shield is related to the circumstances of the enemy and the Muslim community. Al-Ghazali, al-Qurtubi, and Ibn Taymiyya would not support striking the shield if such an act could be avoided altogether. Yet in a state of exceptional emergency, sacrificing the lesser harm of a few innocent lives in order to prevent the greater harm of the deaths of a large number of Muslims—or the loss of the ability to uphold the law and the faith altogether—all of the jurists allow for the execution of the lesser harm. This is identified by al-Libi in his lengthy treatise on the *tatarrus* question, in part on the precedent of al-Ghazali, as the essence of the *ʿilla* (legal rationale) for striking the shield and the guiding principle for the seven necessary conditions it necessitates for carrying out such an action:

1. Striking the shield must occur in the midst of a state of war.
2. Striking the shield is the only way to reach the unbelievers.
3. The striker should seek to avoid striking the shield to the best of his ability.
4. The striker should intend to hit the disbelievers.
5. There is a reasonable probability of an expected benefit attained by striking the shield.

6. The expected benefit is both imminent and immediate.
7. It is not possible to achieve the subduing of a fortress or to break the will of the shielded disbelievers except by a comprehensive manner of killing—such as using fire, or inundating with water, striking with a mangonel, and other [such tactics].[81]

Al-Libi is careful to stress that none of these conditions may be left unfulfilled prior to ordering the strike. What is missing from these conditions, however, is a contemporary analogue for each of these categories—and this seems an intentional omission. Any attempt to clearly define the modern issue of the shield, al-Libi contends, is complicated by the substantial methods by which the enemy has infiltrated Muslim societies by military means, such as through large-scale invasions, raids, and the construction of military bases—but also through the infiltration of daily life, such as daily patrols through crowded markets, convoys along well-utilized roadways, and the embedding of forces with local populations.[82] Equally, the raids upon Muslims have already revealed the willingness of the enemy forces to conduct "retaliatory haphazard bombardments [*al-qaṣf al-ʿashwāʾī al-intiqāmī*] against the homes and markets of civilians."[83] Such a willingness to attack, al-Libi suggests, demonstrates that if the enemy was not fought by all available means, it would gradually begin to exert its will and hegemony across the entire countryside and, eventually, fully prevent Muslims from observing their religion.[84]

Al-Zawahiri and Hasan hold a similar position to that of al-Libi. The contemporary forces of idolatry (*ṭawāghīt*), al-Zawahiri writes, are shielded in armor that is impenetrable to all weapons but the strongest explosives, and then they place these armored forces in the midst of the population, where it becomes difficult to isolate striking them and them alone.[85] Unlike al-Libi, who does not address specific battlefronts and leaves the question of practical application open-ended, al-Zawahiri does contend that striking at the shielded enemy has been effective, at least to the time of his 1996 fatwa, in Egypt, Algeria, Palestine, and Lebanon.[86] Striking at these enemies, though, al-Zawahiri admits, may result in the deaths of innocent Muslim civilians, and for these, he says, both *kafāra* and *diya* should be required. The latter, however, he establishes within the framework of the common welfare. If the mujahidin are able to spare the wealth to pay the families of those killed, then they should do so, but this is only if those killed had a legitimate reason to be

among the disbelieving enemy forces and if the forces fighting the jihad have no other need for the capital.[87] Al-Libi does not suggest specific contexts or a repayment for those killed but does demand of those fighting against the contemporary analogue to the shield the following criteria:

1. Weighing the importance of the intended target: military, political, moral, or economic.
2. Choosing a suitable place and time for the operation with the utmost effort and with complete *ijtihād* so that it is as far as possible from places of residence, major thoroughfares, and places of public transit—avoiding in particular rush hour.
3. Limiting the amount of weapons or ammunition to help accomplish the objective—either eliminating fully or lessening greatly the damage to Muslims. This is a matter of great precision and importance.
4. Striking a realistic and precise balance between the specific harm connected with the target and the damage from striking it and the harm caused to Muslims who will be affected by the operation.
5. Getting to the target by other means is either impossible or unattainable or . . . will lead to the deaths of yet more Muslims.
6. No sincere desire to kill Muslims—the intention [*niyya*] and objective are directed only toward killing those selected from among the unbelievers. One must resolve in his heart to not accidentally kill a Muslim in the operation. If you resolve to not kill in action and deed, it is made possible by the condition of one's heart and intention. All of these matters are included in the saying of God Almighty, "Reverence God as much as you are able" [Qurʾan 64:16].[88]

Underlying all six of these criteria is the same concern for the matter of the common benefit—civilian deaths are to be minimized, enemy casualties maximized, and the level of violence used must be proportional to both. Although he does not explicitly state it, al-Libi appears to favor the application of the *ʿilla* for striking the shield to the modern question of martyrdom-seeking operations if such an operation is not found to cause unnecessary or catastrophic damage to an innocent population. If the violence of the operation is disproportionate to the benefit it brings to the broader community, then the operation should not be undertaken—and this is precisely the position of al-Tartusi.

Tying the Shield to the Self: Immersion and the Question of Public Benefit

The theme of benefit (*maṣlaḥa*) occurs throughout the fatwas on martyrdom-seeking operations featured on the Minbar and repeatedly utilized as the central rationale for the permissibility of the tactic itself. Though al-ʿUyayri considers the question of striking the shield to be less essential to its legal permissibility, primarily because of his belief that the permissibility of self-immersion trumps the question of striking the shield, he recognizes that the common rationale shared by the *tatarrus* question and the question of martyrdom-seeking operations is that both are undertaken out of necessity (*ḍarūra*) to ensure the common welfare (*maṣlaḥa*) of the religion.[89] Yet, even though he argues that immersion is the stronger of the two arguments, al-ʿUyayri maintains that martyrdom-seeking operations represent a point of intersection between the act of an individual undertaken out of a "pious devotion and desire for God [*ikhlāṣ wa-ibtighāʾ wajh Allāh*] and a tactic of battle meant to ensure the common benefit of all Muslims locked in a struggle against a determined enemy [*li-taḥqīq maṣāliḥ li-l-mujāhidīn wa li-daf a al-ʿadū al-ṣāʾil*]."[90] Al-Maqdisi, along with al-ʿUyayri, cites Ibn Taymiyya's claim that *inghimās* is made permissible if there is a preponderant benefit to the community. He concludes that Jihadi-Salafi operations, which he prefers to martyrdom-seeking operations since he argues only God may name the martyrs, must be undertaken to ensure that the word of God is the highest.

In part, this seems an exercise in preserving God's oneness and, in particular, God's capability and power to foreordain human events. For al-Maqdisi, *tawḥīd* is what preserves the correct and just relationship between the creator and those created. If there is hesitance in naming the martyrs, then this will discourage communities from becoming overzealous with naming any activity—even throwing rocks at Israeli Defense Forces—as acts of martyrdom-seeking.[91] Martyrdom is a status bestowed by God, al-Maqdisi argues, not one claimed by humans. To call someone a martyr, then, is to recognize that he or she performed actions along the pattern of the traditions of those who had come before—those who had served the community of the faithful. Thus, al-Maqdisi argues that a "Jihadi operation," a tactic of fighting in God's cause, might be undertaken by someone who resembles a martyr but only insofar as the operation is a means of ensuring that the communal welfare is placed above individual concern.[92] Others, such as Abu Qatada al-Filastini, Hamid al-ʿAli, and Nasir al-ʿUlwan recognize the considerable

benefits of striking the shield and the operation, generally—including the considerable fear the tactic strikes in the hearts of the enemy.[93] In all instances, the benefit brought to the community must not be for one group of Muslims specifically—or the fame of one Muslim specifically—but instead must benefit the general society as a whole.

Al-Shuʿaybi synthesizes both the question of *inghimās* and the question of *tatarrus* into a single, cohesive legal argument. In his initial restatement of the question, al-Shuʿaybi declares that martyrdom-seeking operations "are among the most successful Jihadi tactics."[94] Further, he continues, "Such tactics should be used against the enemies of this religion because of their ability to traumatize the enemy, to inflict grievous wounds and deaths upon the enemy, [and] to propagate fear, anxiety, and dread within the enemy."[95] Following this statement, al-Shuʿaybi cites among his qurʾanic selections Qurʾan 8:60: "And prepare for them what you can of strength [of arms] and horses tethered [for battle], frightening [*turhibūn*] thereby the enemy of God and your enemy, and others besides them whom you know not." Fear is an instrument permitted by God to be used to demoralize one's foes. Al-Shuʿaybi is not suggesting that the individual undertaking the martyrdom operation intend terror—this would be a corruption of the intentionality he calls for in the act—but rather that the tactic itself may cause terror, which is itself a benefit to the Muslim community.

Al-Shuʿaybi raises the questions of *inghimās* and *tatarrus* not as legitimations of the individual act of martyrdom-seeking but as two elements of a common legal rationale shared by both. Underlying both concepts, al-Shuʿaybi suggests, is a matter of common benefit that addresses those who critique the legal arguments for martyrdom-seeking operations by claiming, in the instances of both *inghimās* and *tatarrus* that the individuals who are killed in these attacks are killed by the hands of another. Within the matter of the shield, it was made permissible by the classical jurists to achieve the objective of killing the enemy by striking at the shield. If civilians—Muslim and non-Muslim alike—were killed in this strike, their deaths were considered regrettable but lawful so long as they were collateral damage and not the intended target. Equally, although it was the enemy that placed them in harm's way, al-Shuʿaybi writes, it was a Muslim weapon that killed them. While killing a Muslim is a grave crime, al-Shuʿaybi suggests that the classical jurists permitted the deaths of a smaller, uncertain number of Muslims and a greater number of the enemy so long as that smaller number of deaths would save, with some measure of certainty, a larger number of Muslims.

Within the question of *inghimās*, we see a similar logic—a single individual is permitted to throw himself into the enemy as long as, by his actions, a larger number is saved.

Within an operation, an individual wearing, carrying, or riding inside an explosive device carries himself or herself into the midst of the enemy. A martyrdom seeker, for al-Shuʿaybi, is in a similar position to that of those in the human shield. Both are killed by a weapon made by Muslim hands—but in the case of the martyrdom seeker, a more precise Islamic weapon. In its historical example, al-Shuʿaybi argues that the *tatarrus* matter is an indiscriminate method of killing that is "worse, because killing another Muslim is a graver crime than a Muslim killing himself."[96] The Muslim who seeks martyrdom is, by this logic, maximizing the harm against the enemy while minimizing harm against Muslims—he is, with certainty, killing himself and is, in theory, more discriminate in the detonation of his explosive than was the ammunition launched by the Islamic mangonels in the historical period. Assuming his intentions are sound, as was discussed in chapter 3, the harm the tactic presents to the agent is, for al-Shuʿaybi, specific to the agent alone—a proportional style of combat forgiven within the confines of jihad.[97]

To complete the argument, Al-Shuʿaybi establishes an a fortiori argument to legitimate the tactic. The argument itself is arranged along an *a maiore ad minorus* (from the greater to the lesser) inference. Descending from the permissibility of the grand indiscriminate killing of innocent Muslims in the shield, through the permissibility of immersing oneself into the enemy though there is a strong likelihood of imminent demise, al-Shuʿaybi states, "if one was to undertake a greater crime [the indiscriminate killing of those in the shield], and there is no shame at its audacity, then *a maiore ad minus*, there is no shame in committing a lesser crime, since the objective of both is a traumatized enemy."[98] To al-Shuʿaybi, a martyrdom-seeking operation inflicts less harm upon the Muslim community because it is a more discriminate form of violence. An individual engaged in an operation, possessed of sound intentions toward the divine, is, as in the question of *inghimās*, immersing himself into the enemy forces, but unlike in that action, the individual is taking his own life while, equally, just as in the *tatarrus* question the individual is being struck by a Muslim weapon, the individual knows, with certainty, of his own death and is able, if at all possible, to strike a target that minimizes the death of other innocent Muslims. At each level, the relative benefits to the community are maximized by the self-renunciation and loss

of the individual. The maximization of common welfare is the final rationale necessary for the complete ruling on permissibility.

For the Benefit of All: Renouncing All for the Common Welfare (*Maṣlaḥa*)

In her argument considered earlier, Molloy identified what she considered to be the false premises of the categorical syllogism underlying the logic legitimating martyrdom-seeking operations. Our exploration suggests that Jihadi-Salafis understand the premises and conclusions of their arguments differently. In weighing the terms of *inghimās* and *tatarrus* as issues related to the permissibility of the tactic of martyrdom-seeking operations, we identified public welfare as that which ties the early traditions to contemporary circumstances. The *ʿilla* for striking the shield and the *ʿilla* permitting *inghimās* are equal: there must be a necessary, universal, and absolute benefit to the community. Certainly, substantial critiques of whether such criteria are met by the martyrdom-seeking operations may be made. One need only look to the critiques of al-Zarqawi mentioned by al-Maqdisi and al-Tartusi to know that Jihadi-Salafi authors themselves remain hesitant, if not completely unconvinced, about martyrdom-seeking operations providing a net benefit to the community. However, the point remains. Molloy and Cook advance our conversations on public welfare but do leave some dimensions of the underlying discussion of *maṣlaḥa* within Jihadi-Salafi legal arguments unexplored.

Maṣlaḥa and the Modernity of the Jihadi-Salafi Defense of Martyrdom-Seeking

The repeated appearance of *maṣlaḥa* throughout the Jihadi-Salafi fatwas on martyrdom-seeking operations opens up the possibility of identifying and evaluating how the credal commitments of the Jihadi-Salafi community contribute to the formation of a coherent legal theoretical method (*minhāj*). Given the varied role that conceptualizations of *maṣlaḥa* have played throughout the long histories of Islamic legal theories and given the lack of a concise Jihadi-Salafi legal manual detailing the movement's commitments to a philosophy and methodology of law, identifying this *minhāj* must come

about through indirect means. It depends first on identifying a common and consistent legal concept, in this instance *maṣlaḥa*, and then identifying how Jihadi-Salafi authors understand that concept relative to other usages of it—evidence that was already located in the texts cited by the authors to demonstrate the precedents addressing the questions of *inghimās* and *tatarrus*. Then, once Jihadi-Salafis' concept of *maṣlaḥa* is established, it must be related to their specific credal commitments. What will emerge from this two-part investigation is a concise view of how Jihadi-Salafi creed is used as a legal hermeneutic.

Abu al-Mundhir al-Shinqiti addresses an undated question posted to the Minbar by "abo maysarra": "Does *maṣlaḥa* contradict the Text [i.e., the Qurʾan]?"[99] In his answer, al-Shinqiti affirms that *maṣlaḥa* is acceptable insofar as it is consistent with God's law as revealed in God's revelation. According to al-Shinqiti, the text of the Qurʾan clearly establishes that "all of what God has commanded is good and righteous [*al-khayr wa-l-ṣalāḥ*], and all of what He has forbidden is evil and immoral [*al-shirr wa-l-fasād*]."[100] The identification and ruling based on common welfare, *maṣlaḥa*, is that which is brought about out of "obedience to God's law [*ittibāʾ sharʿ Allāh*]," yet, al-Shinqiti states, "if any *maṣlaḥa* contradicts the texts, then it is an invalid *maṣlaḥa* [*maṣlaḥa malghāʾa*] undeserving of attention."[101] Those who would advance any particular concern for public welfare over the revealed texts are guilty of deviating from the purpose of the law. Al-Shinqiti names the Hanbali scholar Najm al-Din al-Tufi (d. 716/1316), a contemporary of Ibn Taymiyya, as one primary example of this trend.

The disagreement to which al-Shinqiti points in his citation of al-Tufi is a matter related to establishing legal rulings based on unforeseen circumstances using an analogical method (*qiyās*). Often the use of analogical reasoning is predicated upon a direct link established between a revealed text and the matter requiring a ruling.[102] As Wael Hallaq and others have observed, however, as theories of *istiḥsān* and *istiṣlāḥ* developed in the midst of the third/ninth century, jurists began to debate whether it was possible to identify a *maṣlaḥa* absent any grounding within the revealed texts. Malik was the first to be labeled as preferring these unattributed *maṣāliḥ*, known as *maṣlaḥa mursala*, but following this third/ninth-century period, no jurists would accept an unattributed *maṣlaḥa*. What did develop, however, was approval of *maṣlaḥa* in legal reasoning "if it could be shown that the feature of public interest adopted in a case was suitable [*munāsib*] and relevant [*muʿtabar*] either to a universal principle of the law or to a specific

and particular piece of textual evidence."[103] By the fifth/eleventh century, Felicitas Opwis has argued, *maṣlaḥa* itself became "the embodiment of the purpose of the law (*maqāṣid al-sharʿ*)" and was therefore an instrument by which new law was created and old laws were reinterpreted for changing circumstances.[104] This presents a direct challenge to al-Shinqiti, of course, who himself seems to argue that scholars such as al-Tufi have manipulated the law past the intent of the lawgiving God, and the Jihadi-Salafi authors preserve that very intention.

Al-Tufi, like his contemporary Ibn Taymiyya, lived and wrote in the midst of the Mongol invasions of Muslim lands in the seventh/thirteenth century. Central to his theory of *maṣlāḥa*, in the estimation of Opwis, is his brief commentary on the Shafiʿi scholar al-Nawawi's collection of forty narrations.[105] Opwis focuses her analysis on his discussion of the hadith *lā ḍarar wa-lā ḍirār*, which she translates as "neither harm nor harmful requital shall be inflicted."[106] Al-Tufi defends his selection of this hadith, which is not graded as "sound" (*ṣaḥīḥ*) by the majority of traditionists, with the argument that it preserves general qurʾanic prohibitions against corruption and harm. The Qurʾan and Sunna, al-Tufi contends, make a general assumption on any legal matter of averting harm, and any legal ruling that calls for harm must do so only with the existence of another specific textual indicant. As a result of this position, al-Tufi makes an assumption about the nature of God: God will always act with a rationale (*ʿilla*), he contends, and this rationale is to always command that which diminishes harm. Opwis observes that by attributing this sort of causality to God's actions, al-Tufi "shows that safeguarding *maṣlaḥa* is a matter of legal certainty . . . [and therefore] jurists may not neglect safeguarding *maṣlaḥa* in the law-finding process."[107] Limiting his prioritization of *maṣlaḥa* to matters of *muʾamalāt* (civil and social behaviors and transactions) rather than *ʿibādāt* (religious obligations such as prayer), al-Tufi maintains that *maṣāliḥ* must be taken into consideration on matters of politico-legal issues and must always be preserved when considering worldly concerns.[108]

The flexibility provided by al-Tufi's broad understanding of the role of *maṣlaḥa* for adjudicating unforeseen legal cases was extraordinarily appealing to the Egyptian reformers Muhammad ʿAbduh and his student Rashid Rida. The treatise on *maṣlaḥa* by al-Tufi was published by their colleague, the Damascene Jamal al-Din al-Qasimi (d. 1914) in their journal *Al-Manar*. Al-Tufi's argument that *māslaḥa* was the strongest indicant of the law presented, in the estimation of both ʿAbduh and Rida, the possibility

of critiquing the overencumbered tradition (*taqlīd*) favored by the learned scholars and established the capability for a meaningful *ijtihād* on the precedent of the Qurʾan, the Sunna, and the Salaf.[109] Rida agreed with al-Tufi's estimation that the legal interpretation must begin with seeking to preserve what is good and avoids injurious behavior or penalty. Rida, however, incorporated al-Tufi's preference for the preservation of *maṣlaḥa* into his overall political and reformational project and therefore argued that Islam would enjoy greater population in Western countries if the more utilitarian aspects of its legal theory were set forth clearly. Muhammad Qasim Zaman and Malcolm Kerr have both argued that Rida's project may itself have made Rida uneasy, given that "as concerned as he was with demonstrating—and making room for—the responsiveness of the law to changing human needs, the case for such responsiveness threatened to make this law appear as a product of human effort and historical evolution, rather than as a divine blueprint."[110] Such a tension opened Rida to critiques that he was engaged in nothing more than making a palatable utilitarianism for jurists engaged in reforming Islamic legal hermeneutics.

The utilitarian theories of John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham were often critiqued by reformers responding both to Rida's project and to the gradual encroachment of Western modernities into Muslim-majority societies. As the role of Islamic law diminished in response to changing social, political, and economic circumstances, scholars and reformers alike sought to think beyond the Tufi-Rida model which they considered vulnerable to human interests. Opwis argues that these antiutilitarian responses are divisible into two categories: "jurists who belonged to the traditional religious establishment, i.e., *muftīs* . . . who had been educated and/or were employed in an institution like al-Azhar, leaned more toward the Ghazālī/Rāzī and al-Qarāfī models . . . [and] jurists who received a substantial part of their education in Western-style schools . . . were more attracted to al-Shāṭibī's theory of law."[111] Although we have examined their citations of al-Ghazali, it is not possible to fit the authors of the Jihadi-Salafi *ʿaqīda* into this dichotomy—and Opwis recognizes that what she labels "Islamic fundamentalism," of which Jihadi-Salafis would most certainly be part, arose as a distinct challenge to these two juridical responses between the 1940s and the 1960s.[112] Jihadi-Salafism represents, by this logic, a return to sources of legal reasoning and reform in order to attempt yet again to answer the open question

of the role of Islamic law and legal authority in the colonial and postcolonial periods.

If Jihadi-Salafism represents the emergence of a postreform, post-*madhhab* tendency in contemporary Islamic thought, then there are two possible responses to its manifestation. First, Jihadi-Salafi communities may be understood as an opportunistic seizure of political and social power in the wake of the broader crises of authority and education in Islamic law. Examples of this tendency would include Abou El Fadl, Molloy, David Cook, and perhaps Hallaq, who has most recently argued for the collapse of the Shariʿa altogether due to its dual divorce both from the nation-state and from institutions of learning.[113] The second possibility is to consider the seemingly eclectic and diverse methodologies and precedents mobilized by Jihadi-Salafis as an attempt to negotiate a balanced synthesis between the consistency necessary for establishing legal precedent and authority from within the Islamic legal tradition and the variety necessary to appeal to as broad a global audience as possible. Given the geographical distribution of their inquiries, the fatwas on the Minbar discussing these operations show precisely this type of synthesis.

In the discussions of the matters of *inghimās* and *tatarrus*, the repeated language of necessity (*ḍarūra*), universal (*kulliyya*), and certain (*qaṭʿiyya*) associated with the discussion of the benefit (*maṣlaḥa*) of the martyrdom-seeking operations is often located near or drawn from the work of al-Ghazali. Al-Ghazali dealt with the question of *maṣlaḥa* in two works, *Al-Shifaʾ al-ghalil* and *Al-Mustasfa*—but it is in the latter that he clearly defines his understanding of *maṣlaḥa* as "an expression of bringing about a cause of benefit [*manfaʿa*] or averting a cause of harm [*maḍarra*]. . . . We mean by *maṣlaḥa* the preservation of the purpose of the law [*maqṣūd al-sharʿ*]. The purpose of the law, as far as humankind is concerned, is to preserve them for their religion, their life, their intellect, their progeny, and their property."[114] For al-Ghazali the objectives of the law (*maqāṣid al-Sharīʿa*) are the primary means by which the *ratio legis* for a given legal ruling governed by *maṣlaḥa* is established. When attempting to identify the rationale for a revealed law, a jurist must "go beyond the actual facts and assess whether a ruling attains *maṣlaḥa* for the five essential elements of human existence."[115] If the texts appear not to offer any evidence on the question at hand—as they do, al-Ghazali admits, on the question of *tatarrus*—then al-Ghazali considers the ruling an unattested *maṣlaḥa*, which he then classifies within one of three ranks: (1) necessities (*ḍarūrāt*), (2) needs (*ḥajāt*), and (3) improvements (*taḥsīnāt*). Given

that striking the shield fulfills a necessary, universal, and certain benefit for the entire community, al-Ghazali considers the matter one of necessity and, therefore, a prototypical example of an unattested *maṣlaḥa*.

Among the more stringent critics of al-Ghazali and his understanding of the *maqāṣid* was Ibn Taymiyya, which makes the inclusion of both Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyya within the fatwas legitimating martyrdom-seeking operations seem all the more peculiar. Opwis contends that Ibn Taymiyya never explicitly identifies his legal method for identifying and utilizing *maṣlaḥa* within a legal argument, but this, she writes, results in Ibn Taymiyya's having a method of legal interpretation of *maṣlaḥa* that "follows a substantive legal rationality that is more inclusive than that of al-Ghazali and includes anything that brings about benefit and averts harm; every benefit that is not prohibited in the law is permitted; and in cases of need, *maṣlaḥa* can even overrule explicit prohibitions."[116] The intellect of the jurist, according to Ibn Taymiyya, may not adequately grasp questions of benefit and harm separate from the revealed law, but in an instance of an unattributed *maṣlaḥa*—such as the matter of striking the shield—Ibn Taymiyya will allow for "the preponderant benefit against which no prohibition exists within the law."[117] This preponderant benefit is determined on the basis of demonstrable need and necessity, but both are divorced from the conversation on the objectives of the law, which Ibn Taymiyya argued allowed al-Ghazali to establish *maṣlaḥa* as a legal criterion that allows a jurist to "base his decision on this characteristic without having recourse to the textual sources of the law."[118] As a result, Ibn Taymiyya, Opwis contends, "compels jurists to turn away from mechanically applying formal procedures and to examine the revealed texts for each unprecedented situation anew."[119] This is precisely the position taken by al-Maqdisi, al-Shuʿaybi, and others when they claim that martyrdom-seeking operations, as question never before seen, demand a revaluation of other, dissimilar yet analogous cases such as *inghimās* and *tatarrus*.

Ibn Taymiyya creates a legal system in which jurists are encouraged to displace traditional authorities of law and legal reasoning in order that each new legal question is answered with specific recourse to the revealed law. From this, Yossef Rapoport has argued on the basis of Ibn Taymiyya's theological commitments, outlined here in chapters 1 and 2, that there was no possibility for "contradiction between revealed and rational knowledge."[120] As a result, Ibn Taymiyya denied that God, acting as the rational lawgiver, would give

the same *ʿilla* for two similar legal rulings. Seeking the beneficial outcome in a case (*istiḥsān*) and limiting the *ratio legis* (*takhṣīs al-ʿilla*), therefore, become "two terms denoting the same process of finding the relevant difference between two otherwise similar cases, a difference that invalidates a full analogy."[121] Such a process is evident in al-Shuʿaybi's concluding analogies on the question of martyrdom-seeking operations, in which the permissibility of the operation is not based on the prior precedent of the matters of *tatarrus* or *inghimās* but is instead the product of a blend between individual intentions and his identification of the a fortiori argument.

The relationship between Ibn Taymiyya and al-Ghazali is brought into direct focus by al-Maqdisi. Like his contemporaries, al-Maqdisi contends that the question of the shield involves true, general, and incontrovertible rational legal bases. In an undated treatise titled "Al-Qawl al-nafis fi al-nahdhir min khadiʿat Iblis" ("Precious Words Cautioning against the Deception of Satan"), al-Maqdisi outlines his concern that within the breadth of Islamic legal tradition are innovations (*bidaʿ*, sing. *bidaʿa*) lacking any grounding in the revealed texts of the law. Two instruments by which these innovations occurred, he suggests, were the improper exercise of juristic preference (*istiḥsān*) and searching for applicable benefit in legal matters (*istiṣlāḥ*).[122] Following al-Ghazali, al-Maqdisi identifies three categories of *maṣlaḥa*—needs (*ḥājiyyāt*), improvements (*taḥṣīniyyāt*), and necessities (*ḍarūriyyāt*)—and of the three, he identifies *ḍarūriyyāt* as that which prevents harm and includes six categories (not al-Ghazali's five): religion (*dīn*), life (*nafs*), lineage (*nasb*), honor (*ʿirḍ*), reason (*ʿaql*), and property (*māl*).[123] Al-Maqdisi cautions jurists against legislating on each of the objectives individually. Instead, he reprioritizes the objectives. To preserve the law from the vicissitudes of the self, al-Maqdisi demands that "the greatest of all of these benefits without any exception is religion [*dīn*], because . . . it preserves for the people their world and the matters of their livelihoods."[124] With religion established as the most important benefit, even before life itself, al-Maqdisi argues that within the legal matter of these operations, the benefit advanced beyond all other benefits is the radical assertion of the oneness of God Almighty (*tawḥīd Allāh taʿālā*).[125] *Tawḥīd*, al-Maqdisi argues, prevents the possibility of *shirk*, which, as we saw in chapter 1, includes the advancement of individual concerns over and against what God has willed for the community. Al-Maqdisi accepts the objectives of the law as established by al-Ghazali, but, like Ibn Taymiyya, he believes an overdependence on those categories of law, and a pursuit of

utility in general, can lead to a push toward extreme positions on the interpretation and application of law.

To Critique What Is Best: The Utility of Self-Renunciation in the Cause of God

In chapter 3, I argued that the ascetical and renunciative act of a Jihadi-Salafi martyr, imagined as the intentional performance of an individual mujahid struggling in the path of God outside of any traditional political or legal authority, was the second legal rationale (*ʿilla*) among three. For the third of these, covered in this chapter, Jihadi-Salafi jurists argued that one may pursue a self-renunciative martyrdom-seeking operation while struggling in God's cause because it was a lesser harm relative to the greater harm permitted by prior jurists on the question of self-immersion (*inghimās*) and the human shield (*tatarrus*) in their historical moments. Combined, the two rationales further reinforce the rationale underlying the prohibition of suicide outlined by the Jihadi-Salafis as their first rationale (*ʿilla*). A suicide (*muntaḥir*), they argue, is one whose interests are focused on the self and the self alone, while the martyrdom seeker perishing in an explosion does so for the benefit (*maṣlaḥa*) of the religion (*dīn*) and the entirety of the global *umma*. Even those Jihadi-Salafis who disagreed with the application of such logic, such as al-Tartusi, refuted the actual realization of the tactics—not the arguments. The traditions and texts of the law are read by Jihadi-Salafis through the lens of this ascetical utilitarianism—a logic that depends on one spending and giving the totality of oneself out of love of and trust for the divine in order to preserve the broader communal interest.

Such a utilitarian position would seem to complicate Western narratives of utilitarian thought. In his *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789), Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) explores what he calls the "two sovereign masters" of mankind: the principles of pain and pleasure.[126] Humans, he argued, will act always to minimize their pain and maximize their pleasure. To evaluate these actions, Bentham advanced his principle of utility, a maxim that "approves or disproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question."[127] The utility that Bentham sought to observe was not limited to individual interests but was instead, he argued, observable at the level encompassing interstate relations, and like

individuals, the state, too, sought to maximize its interests at all times. To speak of the communal interest was, therefore, also to speak of the interest of the individual: "The community is a fictitious *body*, composed of the individual persons who are considered as constituting as it were its *members*. . . . [Therefore,] it is in vain to talk of the interests of the community without understanding what is in the interest of the individual."[128] What was opposed to the principle of utility was not the actions of individuals against one another or the friction arising from the conflicting interests of rival states but rather those principles that are opposed to the maximization of pleasure, among which Bentham lists sympathy, empathy, and asceticism.

Of the three, asceticism is considered by Bentham to be the antithesis of the principle of utility and the height of religious fervor. As opposed to the principle of utility, the principle of asceticism "approves or disproves of any action, according to the tendency in which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question; but in an inverse manner: approving of actions in as far as they tend to diminish his happiness; disapproving of them in as far as they tend to augment it."[129] Those attracted to the theory of asceticism are often moralists and religionists—individuals who advance it as a matter of "merit and duty" to court pain and to denigrate pleasure and all comfort.[130] Ascetical behaviors are the antithesis of communal progress and benefit and are therefore seen as detrimental to the health of states and businesses. It is on this latter point that Yahya Hashim Hasan Farghal published an essay on both the Minbar and in *Al-Akhbar* titled "*Maslaha* and Shariʿa," in which he wrote in critique of Bentham's theory of utilitarianism:

> Some of those [advocating utilitarianism] advance the principle of general happiness [*saʿāda ʿāmma*] and establish it based on the theories of John Jeremy Bentham. . . . Is it the case that when you find what this general happiness permits . . . then you find a legal principle [*ḥukm sharʿī*] that follows it? And if that which causes harm brings harm to the general welfare [*maṣlaḥa*], then harm befalls the legal principle following it? So, what prevents peddlers in lust [*tajjār al-shahawāt*] and those who love wealth, ambition, and personal gains . . . from distributing their wares . . . in the community?[131]

This critique of utilitarian thought is not unique to Jihadi-Salafi thought, but its inclusion by Farghal reveals the implicit ascetical utilitarianism underlying

its methodology. Farghal demands that utilitarianism, as the mere pursuit of general happiness, is open to outstanding abuses if it is not subjected to some greater moral authority which, for him, is the divine law revealed by God. It is only within the Shari'a, he suggests, that the general welfare is best preserved and upheld. John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) addressed critiques such as these in his essay "*Utilitarianism*" (1861) by arguing that the principle of utility allowed for both baser and higher pleasures and their thoughtful measurement by quantity. For Mill, the physical pleasures of which Farghal spoke are secondary to the primary pleasures of the intellect, which, he states, are the customary pleasures of a being of higher faculty, such as a human.[132] The standard of morality residing within Bentham's principle of utilitarianism is for Mill an existence that maximizes the pleasures and minimizes the pains not of the body but of the intellect. With this, Mill is able to begin to consider the act of the religious martyr. Would such an individual, Mill speculates, engage in his acts of asceticism and renunciation "if he thought that his renunciation of happiness for himself would produce no fruit for any of his fellow creatures, but to make their lot like his, and place them also in the condition of persons who have renounced happiness?"[133] To rephrase: if a martyrdom seeker was shown that the effect of his or her actions after the bomb explodes did not bring about the promised protections to the community, but instead harmed it, would he or she still carry out the act? Al-Tartusi and, to a lesser extent, al-Maqdisi would both offer an answer: no.

This seems a promising and substantial point for future critique. Yet Mill offers his own added nuance. The utilitarian position is one that tolerates self-sacrifice and self-renunciation if the sacrifice adds to the total happiness of society—or at least "tends to increase the sum of total happiness"—and it applauds "devotion to the happiness, or some of the means of happiness, of others; either of mankind collectively, or of individual within the limits imposed by the collective interests of mankind."[134] Mill points to Jesus of Nazareth as an example of this type of utilitarian morality: the willful placing of the needs of the (religious) community above oneself in the very interest of maximizing the happiness of that community. While the Jihadi-Salafis may not agree with the example of Jesus specifically, the logic here is similar: a martyrdom-seeking operation that offers a certain and maximum benefit (*maṣlaḥa*) to the entirety of the community is permitted so long as the individual undertaking the act has intended God and God alone within the act.

Of course, the idea of martyrdom-seeking would likely have been alien to Mill's understanding. It is reasonable to assume that Mill would neither have

condoned nor tolerated the types of acts undertaken by Jihadi-Salafis seeking a final act of self-renunciation in God's cause. The acts diverge from those of Jesus, he might argue, because they are not for the totality of mankind—they are meant to benefit but a smaller community of the greater whole. However, from within the Jihadi-Salafi perspective, Mill's commentary on the principles of utility and happiness are consistent with the objective and purpose of martyrdom-seeking operations. Recall that for Jihadi-Salafis, such an operation is the product of a set of emergency circumstances and meant to preserve and protect those belonging to the "victorious sect" who will preserve and protect Islam until the end of time. That combatants and noncombatants alike may need to be harmed in the course of this campaign is considered acceptable as long as such harm is of a quantifiably lesser total than the benefit striking the enemy provides. What must give pause, then, is how well such logic parallels the utilitarian arguments advanced by scholars of contemporary just-war theory for striking noncombatants. Michael Walzer, in his seminal work *Just and Unjust Wars*, argues that communities that perceive themselves to be under threat must make a wager on striking at noncombatants in the midst of a state of existential emergency, and he concludes that such a strike is permissible if the danger faced is imminent and possibly catastrophic.[135] Along this method of argument, Stephen Nathanson, in his reflections on war in times of emergency and imminent threat, argues that there are clear conditions for the revocation of noncombatant immunity in a time of exceptional emergency:

1. Unintended but foreseeable civilian casualties must not be disproportionate to the value of the military objective.
2. Attacks must not be indiscriminate, i.e., they must be directed at military targets, and the damage they cause must—as much as possible—be limited to the target.
3. Steps must be taken to predict civilian casualties, i.e., to actually foresee those harms to civilians that are foreseeable.
4. Precautionary measures must be taken to avoid or minimize foreseeable harms to civilians so as to ensure that civilian casualties are no greater than necessary to achieve the military objective.
5. If foreseeable civilian deaths cannot be further reduced and remain disproportionate, the attack should not be launched.[136]

The utilitarian position taken by Nathanson is readily observable. Civilians must not be struck as a general principle, but if the principle is to be violated, then there must be a use of force proportional to the military threat or military objective. Note that Nathanson is not addressing only a defensive war. The principles he establishes here could permit offensive tactics of war as well. The utilitarian aspects of the Jihadi-Salafi arguments are not a one-to-one match with Nathanson. None of the muftis and authors under consideration here, with the exception of al-Tartusi, argues for the precise calculation of the harm to befall civilian noncombatants before the attack. Indeed, one would assume that the muftis would argue that they are less concerned with such civilians since, as established in chapter 2, the entire world is considered to be in a state of disbelief and therefore a legitimate battlefield for waging jihad in the path of God.

Conclusion

In the introduction, I observed that J. Z. Smith challenged scholars of religion to seek out those discourses that cause discomfort and attend to their intelligibility in order that they may unsettle us and reveal new answers and problems for old questions. The similarities between the just-war theories advanced by Walzer and Nathanson—theories that have influenced and been debated by those arguing for the use of force against individuals such as Jihadi-Salafis themselves—and the utilitarian theories legitimating martyrdom-seeking operations that have been advanced by Jihadi-Salafis to fight the very governments and societies using those just-war theories must give us pause. Those who would read martyrdom-seeking as a tactic within a broader cosmic war, as a working out of repressed sexualities, or as a lashing out due to social or economic repression must wrestle with a new variable. Jihadi-Salafi jurists understand their own acts of jurisprudence as arguing for martyrdom-seeking as a performed self-renunciative act that is, at least on a minimal level, participating within the same discourses of rationality, proportionality, and utility as their Western counterparts.

These theories of just war and martyrdom-seeking operations part ways on the questions of just authority and just authorization. While the utilitarian arguments underlying a US drone strike in Yemen are authorized, however secretively or clandestinely, by members of the US intelligence community and armed forces, the Jihadi-Salafi renunciant—particularly one engaging

in al-ʿAwlaki's "open-source jihad"—participates outside the control of any institution authorizing such violence. Participating within the imagined borderless world of a modern ascetical warrior, waging his or her war for God and God alone, the ascetical martyr fights while renouncing all concerns for the world. What must unsettle us about this ascetic is not the discovery of similarities between the logic underlying his or her violence and the logic of just-war theory. Such must not be read as the creation of a sympathetic tolerance for Jihadi-Salafis. Make no mistake, thousands of Muslims and non-Muslims considered innocent of any wrongdoing by both Muslim and non-Muslim jurists have fallen victim to acts undertaken by those influenced by jurists we have studied here.

To speak of the ascetical utilitarianism underlying the jihad of Jihadi-Salafis—to allow the texts and words of these muftis to open the possibility for mutual phenomenological critique and inquiry—is to recognize the full breadth of the phenomena of their violence as it is performed within a world that is critiqued by their own narrative yet formulating responses to legal questions not unfamiliar to Western approaches to just-war theory. The scandal of their violence, through the lens of ascetical theory, is made less bitter in this relation, and it becomes possible to see the world not as a cosmic war or mere resistance to colonial and postcolonial powers but as a field on which Jihadi-Salafis call for those to perform love for the divine in painful violation of the sanctity of another. What remains to be seen, however, is what happens when that act of self-renunciation is not simply done for the pursuit of the divine, out of a concern for public welfare, but also done in the service and toward the formation of an entire state.

5

Self-Renunciation and State Formation

Women, Men, and Constructing a Caliphate

> By Allah, we brought [the caliphate] back by the edge of the sword, and we did not do so through pacifism, negotiations, democracy, or elections. We established it according to the prophetic way, with blood-red swords, not with fingers for voting or tweeting. —Umm Sumayyah al-Muhajirah[1]

> It is a *khilāfah* [caliphate] that gathered the Caucasian, Indian, Chinese, Shāmī [Levantine], Iraqi, Yemeni, Egyptian, Maghribī [North African], American, French, German, and Australian. Allah brought their hearts together. . . . Their blood mixed and became one, under a single flag and goal, in one pavilion, enjoying this blessing, the blessing of faithful brotherhood." —Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi[2]

Women Fighting in the Cause of God?

A central police station sits just north of the campus of Kenyatta University along Makadara Road in the Old Town area of Mombasa, Kenya. The district, whose sites were once considered for inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage list, is a blend of Kenyan, Arab, European, and Asian cultures—a testament to Mombasa's place as a primary conduit of regional trades and its fraught centuries-long history of negotiating with imperial governors dispatched from Oman, Portugal, and the British empire. The two-story structure of the station, painted white with red, yellow, and blue highlights, sits relatively low to the ground. Less than one block away are a Lebanese restaurant, a few banks, and even a Hindu temple. Much as with any police station, locals and foreign travelers visit daily to file reports and check up on unsolved petty crimes and cases.

And God Knows the Martyrs. Nathan S. French, Oxford University Press (2020) © Oxford University Press.
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On September 11, 2016, there were few police officers or visitors who paid much mind to the three women who entered wearing the *buibui*—a local term describing the niqab, a veil covering the head and face that leaves the eyes uncovered. The women told the officers who met with them that they wished to report the theft of a cell phone. The police began to ask the standard questions for any investigation: "Where were you? What were you doing? When did you notice it missing?" As they were answering the questions, the women paused and threw aside their robes, revealing their bulletproof vests, a set of petrol bombs, and an undetonated explosive belt. Screaming *Allahu akbar!* ("God is greater!"), one of the women unsheathed a knife and set upon the officers. Another threw one of the bombs near a group of officers, setting fire to the station. The surrounding police opened fire, killing the three women before the second bomb and the belt could be detonated. Two officers suffered injuries.[3]

Although there was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attacks, many suspected the al-Shabaab movement. This suspicion grew as Kenyan authorities began to release details of the assailants and their co-conspirators. The leader of the women, Tasnim Yakub Abdullahi Farah, had once studied for her certificate of secondary education but was dismissed from her school for repeated delinquency. Another of the women, Fatuma Omar, also had sat for her certificate. The third suspect, identified only as Mariam, had a record with the police due to suspicious activity but was never held after her arrest. Their accomplices, all Somali nationals and refugees from the civil war, were taken into custody in the days following the attacks.

Three days after the attacks, however, the Amaq News Agency of ISIS announced that three "supporters" of the Islamic State were responsible for the attack along Makadara Road in response to what it labeled "calls to target crusader states."[4] Earlier, in May of that year, just prior to the sacred month of Ramadan on the Islamic calendar, ISIS spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani (1977–2016) called upon Muslims and supporters of the self-declared caliphate of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (1971–2019) to strike out against disbelievers wherever they were found.[5] The message signaled a shift for al-Adnani, whom a US airstrike would kill in August of that year.[6] For the first time, rather than encouraging Muslims to undertake a migration (*hijra*) to the nascent caliphate, al-Adnani acknowledged that some Muslims who wished to strike in the name of ISIS might be better off staying in their home countries, fighting and dying in God's cause.

Two days following the announcement from Amaq, ISIS again touted confirmation of its claim that the Kenyan high school graduates had acted in support of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. In the forty-eighth issue of *Al-Nabaʾ*, the weekly Arabic-language newsletter of ISIS, just above a photo of a blood-soaked knife clasped in the dripping hands of an ISIS fighter, a headline proclaimed: "Devoted Granddaughters Compete alongside the Armies of the Caliphate in Kenya." The story's writer avoids describing the acts of the women as acts of martyrdom or *inghimās* in God's path:

> Further, in a second answer to the calls for targeting the crusader nations and their nationals, three sisters supporting the Islamic State stormed [*iqtaḥamat*] a police station in Mombasa, Kenya. . . . Designated sources tell *Al-Nabāʾ* that the supporters—Umm Maʿbad, Umm Saʿd, and Umm Maysara—entered the police station in Mombasa where they attacked with knives and with hand grenades.[7]

Regardless of whether their *kunya*s (nicknames) were adopted by or assigned to the women by ISIS correspondents, Umm Maʿbad, Umm Saʿd, and Umm Maysara are all names derived from the companions and followers of Muhammad in the nascent seventh-century CE Muslim community. The women, the article suggests, were emulating two traditions: the emergent tradition of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's caliphal project and its appropriation and usage of the tradition of the Salaf. Unlike their namesakes, however, the Kenyan women died in combat.

Something remains absent from the article. The women are called neither "martyrdom seekers" nor "martyrs." Whether they considered themselves possessed of the right intention for such an operation, which as we saw in chapter 3 is an essential component of any martyrdom operation, or as undertaking self-immersion in the enemy, which as we saw in chapter 4 is for the betterment of the *umma*, is answered by the reference to a "statement" left by the women and published in *Al-Nabaʾ* after the attack.

The women, or the unnamed author writing in their stead, opened with a citation from the Qurʾan taken from the chapter named by some exegetes as *al-Mumtahanah* ("She Who Is Examined"), which is a Medinan sura taking its title from the woman about whom it was believed to have been revealed, Umm Kulthum bint ʿUqbah (d. ca. 660 CE). The particular verse cited offers the reader a familiar narrative of *al-walā wa-l-barāʾ* and calls upon the listener to remember the example of Ibrahim, who proclaimed to those who

disbelieved in God and God's message: "Truly we are quit of you and of all that you worship apart from God. We have rejected you, and enmity and hatred have arisen between us and you forever, till you believe in God alone."[8] As was seen in chapter 2, this verse is often cited in discussions of *al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ* and suggests that the women saw their raid on the police station both as a self-renunciation of the corrupt world—they continually label the Kenyan state as "defiled" (*anjās*)—and as a denial of their self-identity being affected by its corruption. At the conclusion of their statement, the women affirm, "we will fight you and all the disbelievers—by the permission of God—until the whole earth is governed by the Shariʿa of our Lord."[9]

In the article, the women are aligned with the example of the Salaf, they proclaim their desire to separate from the corruption of the world and their Kenyan national identities, and they announce their hope that their actions strike terror in the hearts of disbelievers and help make God's divine law highest. Their public crimes are framed as acts of self-renunciation in God's path—and yet they are denied the title of "martyr." A quick glance through the same issue of *Al-Nabaʾ* shows several attacks by other declared supporters of the Islamic State:

> Fifteen men of the apostate Peshmerga fell dead on Monday in an *inghimāsī* operation undertaken by the Islamic State. . . . A group of *inghimāsiyyīn* attacked [*hajamat majmūʿat inghimāsiyyīn*] their barracks with light weapons.[10]

Also compare it with a discussion of a martyrdom operation, from the same issue:

> On Tuesday, an Islamic State soldier launched a martyrdom-seeking attack [*hajūm istishhādī*] against a *rāfiḍī* [Shiʿi] checkpoint north of Baquba [Iraq]. According to the media office in Diyali, the martyr—thanks be to God—was well trained in [the tactic of] *inghimās* and was able to detonate his car bomb amid the security checkpoint of the apostate *rafiḍī* [Shiʿi] militias.[11]

In both examples, the attacks were similar to those of the Kenyan women in the means of attack—knives and explosives for the women, light weapons for the men—or the target of the attack being a security checkpoint, a police station, or a barracks. Yet the women are described neither as having undertaken a martyrdom operation nor as immersing themselves in the ranks of

the enemy. This deficit of descriptive language persists when considering the verb used to describe the Kenya attack: "stormed" (*iqtaḥama*). Elsewhere, again in the same issue, the same word is used to describe an attack by those described as mujahidin.[12] For the women, such a description is absent. One key difference separates the attacks against the Peshmerga, the Shiʿi militias, and those other attacks described in *Al-Nabaʾ*: all the assailants were men.

Self-Renunciation as Self-Formation: Martyrdom, Maṣlaḥa and Migration (*Hijra*)

Of course, there is no way to know whether those martyrdom seekers and *inghimāsī* fighters described in *Al-Nabaʾ* were well versed in the jurisprudential debates surrounding their actions. In their public and published statements, the women accepted the Jihadi-Salafi theodicy and signaled their performance of a public renunciation of the world (*dunyā*). In the days following the attacks, Mombasa police leaked sections of a letter written in English and attributed to the women.[13] The letter, similar in language to the description given by Amaq, offered one additional detail: the women made a pledge (*bayʿa*) of their loyalty to the caliphate of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and ISIS. Yet, though they followed the same pattern as countless men before them, the woman remained unequal in status.

That Jihadi-Salafis possess an explanatory narrative of suffering and violence for the world was clear within the legal and theological writings featured on the Minbar and discussed earlier here. This narrative, a theodicy, offers a simplistic yet profound premise: the world (*dunyā*) corrupts, and religion (*dīn*) purifies. Such purification requires a mindful renunciation of the world. A believer—male or female—wishing to restore it must engage, on a personal level, in this renunciation. Men who choose to seek martyrdom as an act of self-renunciation, as we have seen, will die as martyrs if their intentions are well ordered and, in doing so, will exemplify for others a violent truth: the Jihadi-Salafi project in this world will be realized only by elevating the religion (*dīn*) above all other fundamental concerns of life. Such an act is one that defends and protects the community and reminds others that of the objectives of the Shariʿa, religion is the highest.

In the fatwas of al-Shuʿaybi, al-Maqdisi, and al-Binʿali, though, little mention was made of how the martyrs and their actions would form their ideal Islamic state. Those who would engage in martyrdom-seeking operations

were to do so without care for economic or political concerns. Their performance was patterned within the imagined behavior of those who went to the frontier and fought—such as Ibn al-Mubarak. The declaration of the caliphate of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and the claim to territory made by ISIS altered these ascetical narratives of martyrdom and violence. Pious acts of self-renunciation—made manifest in martyrdom-seeking operations—become instruments of violence meant to assist in the creation of a physical state. Such instrumentalization also reveals, however, that the physical creation of ISIS emerged alongside the construction of an emerging religious nationalism.

This chapter explores how the active self-renunciation of the world found within Jihadi-Salafi calls to struggle in the cause of God transforms into an active participation in self-formation within an imagined community and a constructed state. I argue that what separates the caliphal project of ISIS from other Jihadi-Salafi contemporaries is its attempt to transition the renunciation of the Jihadi-Salafi *ʿaqīda* and *minhāj* into a mode of social formation, national imagination, and state-building. In his work on religious nationalism, Roger Friedland writes that "religious nationalism represents the return to text, the fixity of signs, the re-narrativization of the nation in a cosmic context."[14] What makes this a religious project, in his framing, is that a nationalist "offers not only a social space from which to mobilize, but also a concrete cosmos . . . [wherein] the faith-based familyis understood as a vehicle of divine creation, both as a model of the polity and as the element unit of which the nation is composed."[15] As a self-fashioned caliphate, ISIS argues that it alone among its contemporaries constructed a state upon its reading of a "true prophetic methodology" (*minhāj nubūwwa*). Those who understand and respond to this call, pledging an oath (*bayʿa*) to the caliphate and undertaking a migration (*hijra*) toward its banners, do so with the belief that they are migrating toward not only a geographic territory fashioning itself as a domain of peace (*dār al-Islām*) but also the only state within which they can live fulfilled and complete lives in authentic submission (*Islām*) to God.[16] Implicated within this nationalistic project are the roles of violence, migration, and gender in the creation of ISIS's declared caliphate.

Nationalisms tie together the physical and the imaginary. We must consider the relationship between the physical construction of the state and the imagined nation consisting of people inhabiting its boundaries, pledging their loyalties to its territory, and dwelling within its cities. What is imagined implies mental faculties—the ability of the mind to envision, create, and

communicate—directed toward the conditioning of the self and the body to support and fulfill the needs of others in the nation. Construction implies the active physical activity of the body in the world. From both the physical and the imaginary emerge the social, cultural, economic, and moral authorities that regulate, define, and distinguish one nation from another.

Astute readers will see the influence of Benedict Anderson's idea of nationalism as an "imagined community" here. For Anderson, the communal aspect of the imagined community reveals a "fraternity that makes it possible . . . for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings."[17] This willingness to die for the state, however, emerges from a broader ordering of the self within society or, in the case of those living abroad, the ordering of the self toward the imagined homeland. Nationalism is a modern phenomenon. It relies on modern technologies to create and sustain the narratives legitimating the state's control over territory and the body.

Initially, it might seem that this discussion of an ISIS nationalism contradicts the ideas of self-renunciation and asceticism. State sovereignty over body and territory is precisely what renunciants and asceticism perform against. As Gavin Flood observes in his discussions of asceticism, modernity is an antagonist of the ascetic self because it brings into question the traditions upon which ascetical renunciation are based.[18] Equally, Richard Valantasis envisions ascetical renunciation as an active attempt to create alternative subjectivities against dominant culture.[19] Asceticism therefore differs from self-formation in a key aspect. As Valantasis argues, self-formation—about which Michel Foucault, Peter Berger, and others wrote—occurs within a dominant culture for the sake of shaping oneself to thrive within that dominant culture. This form of self-formation, Valantasis states, is a form of social formation as well, in which one works to develop a "socially acceptable ethos" that will permit one to take on increasing roles and responsibilities—employment, religious office, or political authority, for example.[20] The difference, he suggests, rests with the forces shaping one's identity:

> Formation orients itself toward dominance; asceticism orients itself to alterity and subversion. Formation, the primary means whereby a person becomes a functioning member of a dominant group or society includes such systems as etiquette, social propriety, participation in ceremonial events and activities, as well as other customary practices. Members of a group are socialized, integrated, taught various appropriate behaviors and

> modes of thinking, and molded into a person capable of seamlessly participating in the life of the group.[21]

With their rejection of broader Islamic theological and legal traditions, their emphasis on renouncing the material world and its claims, and their call to all Muslims who understand and are capable to join their struggle, Jihadi-Salafis—including al-Qaʿida and its affiliates in the Shuʿaybi school—follow the ascetical orientation toward "alterity and subversion." ISIS does as well. Where the partisans and belligerents of ISIS advance past these prior Jihadi-Salafi projects is in their insistence that for a believer to be able to withstand the corrosive threat posed by the dominant culture, one must renounce disbelief, migrate inwardly (in a spiritual sense) or outwardly (in a physical sense) toward the community of the faithful, and struggle to cultivate and secure the territory needed for the creation of an alternative yet newly dominant culture—one emphasizing the complementarity of genders—that will support the institutions of a nascent caliphal state. This is a self-renunciation toward the formation of a state.

State formation, then, requires self-limitation. In their discussions of jihad and *zuhd*, ISIS authors suggest that only the ideal state will produced the well-ordered soul. Simply hearing the call to join the caliphate and pledge loyalty is insufficient. One must manifest one's will to join—through *bayʿa* (oath taking), *hijra* (migration), or both—and having done so, one must make manifest an act of disavowal of all non-Muslim influences. To order the soul is to place oneself in a relationship with broader society. Outside the caliphate, this relationship was one of renouncing worldly comforts, but within the caliphate, this was a self-limitation, an acceptance of one's gendered role in the service of the state.

The actions of the self-proclaimed "sisters" in Kenya were gendered within the pages of *Al-Nabaʾ*. The young women, described as "granddaughters" of the caliphate, were seemingly denied the full status of men as martyrs or martyrdom seekers. The negotiations of family, sexuality, and gender are hallmarks of projects of national self-imagination, and the careful protection of the titles of the Somali sisters suggests that ISIS was engaged in the same.[22] As Beth Baron and Saba Mahood demonstrated in their research on Egypt, the roles of women as mothers and the narratives shaping their bodies as bearers of national honor are often central ways by which women's political activity is either restricted or granted agency.[23] Here, I explore how ISIS authors presented women as equal participants in the project of state making

but within carefully delineated gendered roles. Rather than have primary roles as combatants, they were expected to be supporters of their husbands and the guarantors of the next generation of the caliphal state.

The physical construction of the state, however, was considered impossible without the assistance of the faithful. When the caliphate was declared, ISIS fashioned itself a functioning government for several million Iraqis and Syrians—whether they chose that state or not. However, ISIS also understood the declaration of its caliphate as a foundational moment that reconsecrated the landscape of northern Iraq and eastern Syria. Its global call to Muslims to undertake a *hijra* or migration to the state, present in the very first issue of its English-language magazine *Dabiq*, underlines this importance.[24] In Islamic traditions, *hijra* was a form of migratory pilgrimage—one that the Prophet Muhammad himself is argued to have modeled when he departed from Mecca for Medina in 622.[25] Migration to its caliphate was an obligatory act, ISIS argued, because it was a performance of *al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ*, a movement from one's old life in the world (*dunyā*) toward one's new life in the caliphate. Such migration might culminate in martyrdom—reminiscent of Anderson's idea of nationalism as a "willingness to die"—but before such an act, it will allow for one's renunciation of an old life to become the foundation of self-formation and creation of the imagined caliphate and its physical territory.

A Savage State: The Caliphal *Dawla* of ISIS

On June 29, 2014, Abu Bakr al-Hussayni al-Baghdadi, born Ibrahim ʿAwad ʿAli Muhammad al-Badri in 1971, slowly scaled the steps of the minbar of the Great Mosque of al-Nuri in Mosul and proclaimed his restoration of a Sunni Islamic caliphate on the first day of Ramadan. The move was met with widespread criticism.[26] Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the Qatari-based Egyptian jurist, announced that though he longed for the return of the caliphate, "the declaration issued by the Islamic State is void under sharia and has dangerous consequences for Sunnis living in Iraq and for the revolt in Syria."[27] Jihadi-Salafis were equally condemnatory. Ayman al-Zawahiri, long a critic of al-Baghdadi, had already broken formal relations with ISIS in January 2014.[28] Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi and Abu Qatada al-Filastini had both been long opposed to any declaration of al-Baghdadi's caliphate and considered those who supported ISIS to be mere pretenders to any authority to make political

and legal pronouncements.[29] The declaration fractured al-Maqdisi's consensus of jurists featured on the Minbar: Abu Saʿd al-Amili, Turki al-Binʿali, and Abu al-Mundhir al-Shinqiti all sided with the Islamic State against their mentor.[30] The rifts created by the declaration of al-Baghdadi's caliphate remain open and festering among formerly like-minded Jihadi-Salafi allies.

The caliphate also received considerable attention from researchers. In Islamic history, as Mona Hassan argues, the "caliphate" was used varyingly as a means of imagining history as much as it was a political institution.[31] However, as Hassan notes, the caliphate project of ISIS (which she calls the pejorative "Daʿesh") is a departure from prior caliphal narratives. Other projects recounted the historical emergence of ISIS, with special attention paid to how foreign intervention, socioeconomic impoverishment, and internal competition drove ISIS to break with several of its Jihadi-Salafi allies and declare a caliphate.[32] Other studies focused on the apocalyptic narratives of ISIS's caliphate.[33] Shorter studies approached the caliphate as beginning as a "paper state" during the insurgency in Iraq following the 2003 US invasion and then maturing into an institutionalized government with extraterritorial ambitions.[34] Another, analyzing the Islamic State's legal system, argued that its interpretation of Shariʿa was meant to (1) establish a legal basis for territorial sovereignty and expansion, (2) enforce internal discipline within the Islamic State's own ranks, and (3) justify its extractive taxation economy.[35] In each case, researchers were careful to note the attempts by ISIS to justify its actions through its appropriation of Islamic legal and theological traditions. In the following sections, I contribute to this conversation by linking ISIS political philosophy and legal interpretations to its project of self-formation.

Imagining the State: The *Dawla* of ISIS

ISIS grounded its authority to govern by claiming it followed a "prophetic methodology" (*minhāj al-nubūwwa*). It defined this by citing a narration attributed to Muhammad and found in the *Musnad* of Ibn Hanbal:

> Hudhayfa said, "The Messenger of God—may God's blessings and peace be upon him—said, 'Prophethood [*nubūwwa*] will be among you until God wills. Then, God will remove it when He wills. Then, there will be a caliphate following the prophetic method [*minhāj al-nubūwwa*] that will be among you as long as God wills. Then, God will remove it if He wills. Then,

> there will be contemptuous kingship [*mulk*] that will be among you as long as God wills. Then, God will remove it if He wills. Then, there will be an oppressive kingship [*mulk*] among you for as long as God wills. Then, God will remove it if He wills. Then, there will be a caliphate following the prophetic method [*minhāj al-nubūwwa*].' Then, he [the Prophet] fell silent."[36]

ISIS authors read this as a proof text that configures the interpretative framework of their memory of history. The narration begins with the original, precedent-establishing prophetic methodology of Muhammad. Then, in the period of the Salaf, came the era of the four rightly guided Sunni caliphs and the continuation of Muhammad's prophetic project. However, as the narration indicates, there would be periods where those ideals—though still willed by God—would fade away under "contemptuous" and "oppressive" eras of kingship. Finally, however, the caliphate on the prophetic methodology would be restored. As Will McCants notes, the silence of Muhammad was often read by Jihadi-Salafis such as Anwar al-ʿAwlaki, and other apocalyptic thinkers as indicating that the restoration of the caliphate is a harbinger of the end of time and the imminence of God's judgment of the faithful and unfaithful.[37] The Islamic State on a prophetic methodology was framed by ISIS as participant in a historical tradition extending to the community of Muhammad.

Yet the very name chosen by ISIS belies its political project as distinctly modern. The choice by the Islamic State to persist in using the term *dawla* ("state") in documents, media publications, and even popular *nashīd*s, after the declaration of its caliphate by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in Mosul in 2014 requires contextualizing its translation. The word *dawla*, in pre-Islamic and Classical Arabic, traces its etymology through the trilateral Arabic root *d-w-l*, which itself was likely received from speakers of Akkadian and Syriac living and traveling in the Arabian Peninsula and al-Sham regions, carries the meaning "to turn, to alternate."[38] Neither the Qurʾan nor the Sunna literature records a usage of *dawla* in the sense of "state."[39] The usage of *dawla* to designate a dynasty does not seem to begin until the historians writing in the ʿAbbasid Caliphate in the ninth and tenth centuries CE referred to its rule as a "turn [*dawla*] of success" and supporters of its rule as the "sons of the dynasty" (*abnāʾ al-dawla*).[40] Even in these translations, the idea of something passed along consecutively, in turns, remains. Thus, the "sons of the dynasty" become the "sons of this epoch" or the "sons of this era of rule."

Although there are not yet sustained studies on the evolution of the term *dawla*, it appears to have become synonymous with the idea of the modern state in the nineteenth century amid European colonial projects and attempts by Arab and Muslim intellectuals to answer the challenge of the nation-state system within their own *dawla*, the Ottoman Empire. As Wael Hallaq argues, the term itself had no role in theories of statecraft or law prior to this time, instead referring to a period of time in which a *dawla* governs but is "temporary, ephemeral, having no intrinsic, organic, or permanent ties to the Community and its Shariʿa."[41] As a result of this mutability, the *dawlāt* (plural) would rise and fall on the basis of their relative strengths and weaknesses. A new *dawla* would be tasked with the same responsibilities as the one it replaced, namely, the protection of the boundaries. A *dawla* proved its legitimacy through its sustainability.

As the state acquired territory, ISIS authors began to publish and comment on its nascent theory of state formation as a project of ensuring its stability. Although never rendered comprehensively, the political theory underlying ISIS's theory of state formation emerged across Arabic and English-language publications and gestured toward a procedural development of the institution of the caliphate (*khilāfa*). This process begins with the individual and would theoretically proceed systematically until one is fully established within what ISIS authors argue is a full and robust submission (*Islām*) to God and to God's revealed law, the Shariʿa, as achieved within their society.

The individual role within state formation begins with an act of self-renunciation. The process begins with the individual believers hearing (*samʿa*) the call to Islam, to the truth of the revelation (the Qurʾan) by God to God's Messenger, Muhammad, and to the obligatory call of the caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, to the territory of the caliphate and the Islamic State.[42] Upon hearing this call, an individual, seeking an authenticity of faith, should obey (*ṭāʾa*) and undertake a migration (*hijra*) to the territory of the state. The connection of listening to migrating and struggling in God's cause is made by ISIS authors as an act of what Flood would call the performance of the "memory of tradition." Would-be residents of the caliphate are called upon to renounce their worldly comforts and head to the lands of the caliphate.[43] The departure begins the process of community building.

The migration to the Islamic State of the caliphate will unify those believers from abroad with the residents who either already made the journey or found themselves subject to the authority of the state. With the arrival to the state, formation begins. As part of joining the community, new

members from without were expected to destroy their passports—framed as a public act of *al-walā wa-l-barāʾ*—and were reviewed by an intake committee to closely fit their skills and abilities to the needs of the state. This is the ideal of *jamāʿa*, which, in a series of articles in *Al-Nabaʾ* and *Rumiyah*, ISIS identifies as a form of obligatory communal consensus—a need to live alongside Muslims unified in a single creed (*ʿaqīda*) and call (*daʿwa*).[44] It is on the point of forming community that individual formation becomes part of state construction. Although our understanding of the administration of ISIS is incomplete—since we have limited access to all records—two documents of unknown authorship help establish the political philosophy of the state: "Principles for the Administration of the Islamic State" ("Mabadiʾ fi Idarat al-Dawla al-Islamiyya"), published in 2014, and "Raising the Banner with Shariʿa Politics" ("Tawʿiyya al-raʿiyya bi-l-siyasa al-sharʿiyya"), published in 2016.[45]

Both documents signal the nature of the transition from the individual to the community. In classical Islamic law—particularly in the writings of Ibn Taymiyya—*siyāsa sharʿiyya* meant a pattern of governance derived from Islamic legal and theological principles.[46] In the "Principles" document, which is the lesser developed of the two, this pattern of caliphal governance required finding ways of having the migrants (*muhājirūn*) who heeded the call live alongside those already in Iraq and Syria—whom the text refers to as the helpers (*al-anṣār*), an overt linkage of the modern caliphal project to Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina. In the "Raising the Banner" document, the settlement of migrants alongside those already present requires the creation of administrative units and also the pledging of allegiance to the caliph (*bayʿa*).

The *bayʿa*, was a pivotal step in establishing the possibility of *imāra*, territorial governance. In the formative Islamic period, a *bayʿa* was a physical swearing of an oath to a political leader, which in the case of the emerging proto-Sunni communities was to the caliph.[47] By the time of Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406), the *bayʿa* was understood as a contract between the commander of the faithful (*amīr al-muʾminīn*) and an individual such that the individual "surrenders supervision of his own affairs and those of Muslims to him [i.e., the *amīr*]."[48] More recently, pledges (*bayʿāt*) have been used in a variety of secular and religious contexts.[49] For the Islamic State, the public performance of the *bayʿa* was claimed to follow the earliest precedents of Islamic communities—thereby, in its argument, recreating the performance of the Salaf—but also served as a public performance of one's renunciation of past

loyalties and a communal reminder of the scope of ISIS's territorial footprint, both real and imagined.[50]

As the community emerges with its pledges of allegiance, ISIS argued that it would lead to the possibility of *imāra*, or the idea of territorial governance. As a concept of nation- and state-building, *imāra* establishes the possibility for a unified front against tyrannical and idolatrous political authorities—the *ṭaghūt*. *Imāra* then will give rise to the possibility of *imāma*—political leadership—which ISIS argues is the true realization of the *millat Ibrāhīm*—the community of Muhammad discussed originally by al-Maqdisi.[51] Political authority, however, was achieved only through a transformation of territorial conditions—a strategy that drew upon Abu Bakr al-Naji's "management of savagery" theory. Authority created the possibility for a process of consolidation and the establishment (*tamkīn*) of an enduring state for God's vice-regent, the caliph, to work toward the construction of a *khilāfa*.[52] Then, and only then, is a fully realized submission to God—Islam—possible.

The Brutality of State: Abu ʿAbdullah al-Muhajir's *Fiqh of Blood* and Abu Bakr al-Naji's *Management of Savagery*

As the caliphate sought to control its territories, amid the brutal images of the beheadings of James Foley, Steven Sotloff, Raad al-Azzawi, Yasser Faisal al-Jumaili, Abbas Medlej, Muhammad Akidi, David Haines, Alan Henning, and Kenji Goto—and others too numerous to count who were raped, tortured, and killed while in ISIS captivity—commentators began to argue that ISIS evolved in its usage and justification of violence.[53] ISIS was not the first movement to engage in beheadings—after all, Abu Musʿab al-Zarqawi, a forerunner to the movement, filmed his infamous decapitation of Nicholas Berg in 2004—and for those prior movements, beheadings also sought to exploit tactical advantages and extend theological debates on the usage of violence.[54] Other approaches to the decapitation and execution films argued that they were meant to spread messages to both in-groups and out-groups.[55] Another dimension remained, however: the instrumentalization of violence for state formation which I explore here following the discussions of Brian Fishman, William McCants, and Ahmed S. Hashim.

Two texts, in particular, demonstrate the types of syntheses between legal theory and political strategy that ISIS pursued in its use of violence as statecraft. These are Abu Bakr al-Naji's *The Management of Savagery* (*Idarat*

al-tawahhush) and Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir's *Matters in the Fiqh of Jihad* (*Masaʾil min fiqh al-jihad)*.[56] Given what appears to be their substantial influence on the rise of al-Zarqawi and what is quickly being labeled "Zarqawist thought," relatively little is known about the biography of either author. Both men likely had contact with al-Zarqawi; al-Naji likely traveled with him from Afghanistan in 2001, while al-Muhajir was identified by al-Zarqawi as one of his most important scholarly influences.[57] McCants and Fishman both argue that al-Naji was likely the pen name of Muhammad Khalil al-Hakaymah, an Egyptian Jihadi-Salafi who was likely killed in combat or published under a different name.[58] Al-Muhajir, who may have also gone by the name Mohammad Ibrahim al-Saghir, likely is an Egyptian veteran of the jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan.[59] According to Mustafa Hamid (aka Abu Walid al-Masri), who fought alongside al-Qaʿida and the Taliban, al-Muhajir headed the Khaldan religious institute—where he assisted in training Jihadi-Salafis and remained a critic of Bin Ladin's al-Qaʿida and its September 11, 2001, plot.[60] It was not until 2000 that al-Qaʿida's commanders would invite al-Muhajir to join them as a scholarly authority. During that time, al-Muhajir found one student willing to listen to his legal interpretations justifying martyrdom operations, *takfīr* of non-Muslims, torture, the indiscriminate killing of noncombatants, and other forms of nontraditional warfare: al-Zarqawi.[61]

The texts of both authors were reported as being used by ISIS commanders in the field. Although Abu Abdir-Rahman al-Banghali, writing in the twelfth issue of *Dabiq* (November 2015), argued in a note that al-Zarqawi praised al-Naji's prose ("It's as if the author knows what I am planning," he is purported to have said), al-Naji's text ultimately was left unused for its errors related to affirming the belief or disbelief of co-belligerents.[62] Hassan Hassan and Ahmed S. Hashim confirm that al-Naji's text was present in ISIS training camps and used as part of their training curriculum.[63] Reports indicate that al-Muhajir's text was well read among ISIS commanders as well, often being found near their other files and papers.[64] Of the two, the text that appears to have been circulated more widely among ISIS fighters and commanders was *Matters in the Fiqh of Jihad* (*Masaʾil min Fiqh al-Jihad*), more popularly known as the *Fiqh of Blood*.[65] In his introduction to the work, al-Muhajir claims that it is a selection of discussions from a much larger work, *The Compendium on the Fiqh of Jihad*, although it is unclear if this text was ever produced or if it is lost to us.

Both al-Muhajir and al-Naji argue that the world must clearly be defined along lines of belief and unbelief. Unlike earlier Muslim jurists, who would

argue for the addition of a third category—the domain of treaty (*dār al-ṣulḥ*)—al-Muhajir argues that the message of the Qurʾan and the mission of Muhammad were provided by God to humanity in order to provide a clear division between belief and unbelief.[66] Like other Jihadi-Salafi authors, faith (*imān*) is the criterion that determines which lives are made licit or illicit, on the basis of *takfīr*, for those struggling in God's cause.[67] Those disbelievers who cease resistance and agree to the terms of a poll tax, the *jizya*, may have their lives considered sacrosanct and protected. In practice, however, the intimidation and violent treatment of the Christian minorities under ISIS rule would suggest that this was not upheld—an exceptional surpassing of classical legal norms related to the *jizya*.[68]

The techniques permitted for fighting against those who would struggle against God and God's community are numerous. In his text, al-Muhajir provides juridical interpretations on martyrdom operations but also assassinations, killing disbelievers in combat (including women and children), decapitation, how to handle captive spies, and how best to handle Muslim fighters being taken captive. Fundamental to his understanding of his jurisprudence was the necessity of migration, however. The *hijra* of the Prophet in al-Muhajir's argument, was the command of God to Muhammad to migrate away from the corruptive powers and forces of the disbelievers in Mecca to the promises of the Arabs and foreigners in Medina to fight on behalf of God and God's Messenger. It was only through this migration to Medina that the community was able to grow in two forms of power: *shawka* and *quwwa*.[69] Often, these two terms are translated similarly, as "power." However, their usage together suggests a specific differentiation. The term *shawka* also may mean a thorn, suggesting the projection of power that has a shocking, debilitating, and sharp feel. In contrast, *quwwa* lacks the same immediacy. *Quwwa* is a power of lasting capacity to influence and dominate through force, often armed, meant to shape a territory to one's terms over time.

While al-Muhajir may have provided the juridical framework for ISIS tactics, al-Naji provided the philosophical structure. The themes of *shawka* and *quwwa* feature heavily in his text.[70] At the core of al-Naji's political philosophy rests a maxim familiar to students of Thomas Hobbes: humanity prefers order, even a tyrannical order, to a state of nature.[71] The path to an ideal Islamic state for al-Naji is one that will involve the management of the violence emerging with a state of nature, something al-Naji refers to as "savagery" (*tawaḥḥush*). In Arabic, the noun *al-waḥsh* refers to an untamed

animal in nature or a monster or another form of ferocity.[72] As a verb, however, the fourth form, *awḥasha*, refers to the condition of being desolate. Like Hobbes, al-Naji argues that if sufficiently chaotic conditions exist, a given population would prefer the order of governance and religion to the chaos left within a failed state.[73] Where al-Naji differs from Hobbes is in his argument that the state of uncertainty, fear, and anxiety caused by the collapse of a state might be used to shock the social and political organization of a society.

By targeting specific strikes against a society's industries—a petroleum industry is used as an example—al-Naji outlines the method of managing the created savagery in a manner that creates the possibility of consolidating (*tamkīn*) society into an Islamic state. The first stage is one of the power of trauma and exhaustion (*shawkat al-nikāya wa-l-inhāk*).[74] The type of power sought during this phase is not one of administration or management but rather one that creates conditions of shock within the targeted society. While *shawka* might be translated as "power," it might also be translated as a "thorn" or "briar," objects that create an immediate and painful shock which, though small, can become debilitating. Through a directed series of operations, al-Naji argues that it becomes possible to exhaust (*inhāk*) the forces of the enemy and those regimes assisting them. This exhaustion will lead to the gradual collapse of domestic security (rises in crime) and will lead to erosion of government services.

Amid the constant shocks administered to the governing society, al-Naji recommends utilizing all forms of media and any available networks to recruit youths to specific, but limited, operations (*ʿamaliyyāt nawʿiyya*).[75] These youths should be trained, through physical exercise and the use of military theories—including, at the encouragement of al-Naji, Western military theory—to prepare for undertaking new operations but also answering the challenges of managing the savagery their operations will create. Such operations should not be on the scale of Bin Ladin and Khalid Shaykh Muhammad's attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, but should instead resemble the example of the 2002 Bali bombings undertaken by the Indonesian Jemaah Islamiyah or the 2002 attack on the Ghriba synagogue in Djerba, Tunisia, organized by Khalid Shaykh Muhammad and Saad bin Ladin (one of Usama's sons) of al-Qaʿida.[76] Smaller operations such as these do not require the prior approval of higher commands; they limit the damage to the broader group if they are discovered but also force a rearrangement of the battlefield. Attacks on economies—on tourist sites, oilfields, or marketplaces, for example—were meant to force the targeted state to not

only re-arrange its security forces closer to more vulnerable targets—thereby diminishing the ability of a state to respond to citizens in need in areas of less strategic importance—but also appeal to any countries intervening against ISIS fighters to cease their campaigns.

It is with the declaration of this security regime that the management of savagery begins. The power of trauma and exhaustion is not simply inflicted upon the forces of the enemy government and its other allies. Trauma and exhaustion are also meant to shock the local population into a docile condition. While the techniques of governance might appear horrific and brutal initially, al-Naji argues that providing food and medical treatment, ensuring adequate educational standards in the religious sciences and material sciences (physics, chemistry, etc.), and maintaining functioning markets and economies with established standards of nonexploitative exchange (e.g., fixed rents, prices, monitored weights and measures) will turn the opinion of the public toward a Jihadi-Salafi administration.[77] Over time, the general public will acclimate to the establishment of the demands of the Shariʿa upon them—including the *ḥudūd* penalties (such as amputation for theft or execution for adulterers)—and will assist the work of their own administration by cooperating with the implementation of moral order, surveillance, and counterintelligence that will deter the betrayal of hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*) and begin the possibility of working alongside coalitions of like-minded territories to expand the attack to further destabilize neighboring territories.

This destabilization is not in the abstract. Martyrdom-seeking operations and forms of more traditional combat are required by al-Muhajir and granted justification by al-Naji. To amplify the impact of these attacks, al-Naji tasks the media with becoming another instrument in the administration of trauma and exhaustion in pursuit of the managed savagery of the state. The people to whom the state will appeal, al-Naji writes, must be shown the positions of the movement on the questions of the Shariʿa, their military objectives, and political positions, all as proof that the movement acts in the public interest of the *umma* (*maṣlaḥat al-umma*).[78] To do this, however, al-Naji proposes utilizing the global media reach of their adversaries. This may require, he admits, kidnapping disbelievers and demanding the ability to speak publicly about their demands, as ISIS did with British journalist John Cantile, or even the beheading of those prisoners—a foreshadowing of the campaigns of al-Zarqawi and, later, ISIS.[79]

"Among the Believers Are Men": Martyrdom, Gender, and Sacrifice

Blood and brutality are not mere instruments of shock and terror. As the ISIS *nashīd* cited in the introduction proclaimed, the caliphate of ISIS is not built merely on those who heard, obeyed, and migrated but from the "blood of the martyrs." Who are the martyrs of the Islamic State? The fact that the three Somali women were described in the *Al-Nabaʾ* article as mere "attackers" and not as martyrdom seekers might suggest a narrower focus on the scope of a martyrdom operation. Perhaps, for example, ISIS jurisconsults had a different view of intentionality and did not wish to infer or assume the intentionality of the Somalis. Another possibility is that the women were unknown to the state itself; they did not carry out their attacks under the training and orders of ISIS military commanders. If one allows that ISIS did know of the attacks in advance, then the decision not to elevate the status of the women was intentional. After all, al-Muhajir and al-Naji favor such attacks as elements of state creation, so why not consider the women part of that project? In a review of ISIS literature on martyrdom, men are overwhelmingly discussed as engaging in activities similar to those of the Somali attackers. What this literature reveals is that the women challenged the gendered discourse on martyrdom found in ISIS literature.

In chapters 3 and 4, I focused specific attention on the fatwa of Turki al-Binʿali, then published under his pseudonym, Abu Humam al-Athari, and written while he was still a student of al-Maqdisi. The arguments advanced by al-Binʿali did not differ greatly from those of the non-ISIS affiliated Jihadi-Salafi jurists and authors. As I showed in the analysis of al-Binʿali's fatwa, several of his arguments cited and followed those of al-Maqdisi and al-Shuʿaybi, suggesting the formation of a formal, if personal, methodology for the legal interpretation of the sources of the law (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) to answer the question of the legal permissibility of martyrdom operations.

One year following the declaration of the caliphate, the frequency of martyrdom operations began to escalate. In his analysis of Amaq news-media reports, Charlie Winter recorded 61 operations in December 2015, 119 in May 2016, and 132 in November 2016.[80] In a single week in March 2014, 40 individuals undertook martyrdom operations.[81] The escalation in the use of what ISIS deemed *inghimāsī* operations occurred as well. Winter reports that between December 1, 2015, and November 30, 2016, 184 individuals died in *inghimāsī* raids against targets mainly in northern Iraq.[82] As the numbers of

martyrdom seekers and *inghimāsī* raids increased, so, too, did the content produced by ISIS media offices calling for additional attacks and praising those who had died in the cause of the caliphate. Much of the material that was created circulated across tens of thousands of social-media accounts. In a focused study of Twitter, for example, running for October–November 2014, researchers uncovered "no fewer than 46,000 Twitter accounts supporting ISIS."[83] There is no question that ISIS supported and encouraged martyrdom attacks, but unlike prior Jihadi-Salafi campaigns, ISIS instrumentalized martyrdom-seeking operations as essential to the construction of its state.

In May or June 2016 (Shaʿban 1437), the Islamic State published the second edition of a book-length work titled *The Rightly Guided Glad Tidings for Planning Martyrdom Operations* (*Al-Bushra al-Mahdiyya li-Munaffadhi al-ʿAmaliyyat al-Istishhadiyya*), written by Abu al-Hasan al-Filastini—not to be confused with Abu Qatada al-Filastini—who, we are told in the introduction, sought his own martyrdom by detonating an explosive belt against "Crusading American forces" north of Baghdad six years before during the US withdrawal from Iraq.[84] The introduction to the first edition, penned in 2010 (1431), expands on this, noting that following his *hijra* to Iraq, "God foreordained for this man that he would depart from this world [*dunyā*] only by certifying the words [of this book] with his own blood." Al-Filastini is given no formal biography in the text. No mention is made of his academic qualifications, if any. Instead, the citation of his death in combat—the affirmation that his words are rendered trustworthy by his blood—is all that should matter to the reader. This is a legal authority gained through self-renunciative combat.

The legal argument traced by al-Filastini follows a similar framework. Like the fatwas of al-Maqdisi, al-Shuʿaybi, and al-Binʿali, al-Filastini works through textual evidence drawn from the Qurʾan, the Sunna, the consensus formed upon the actions and deeds of the Salaf, and finally, analogical reasoning to defend the legitimacy, permissibility, and legality of the act. For al-Filastini, the source (*aṣl*) of the analogy is the permissibility of killing Muslims taken as human shields if there is a clear and certain necessity to do so. The branch (*farʿ*) of the analogy is the permissibility of killing oneself either intending or pursuing martyrdom or the exhaustion of the enemy as a preponderant benefit (*maṣlaḥa rājiḥa*). The *ratio legis* (ʿ*illa*) follows the pattern of the other jurists: if taking the life of one Muslim soul for a legal benefit (*maṣlaḥa*) was permitted in the indiscriminate striking of the human shield, which was based on limited texts, then risking one's life through immersion

into the enemy, which is based on stronger texts, for the sake of God and in pursuit of martyrdom must also be permitted.[85] Therefore, al-Filastini concludes in his ruling (*ḥukm*), from the lesser to the major (*a maiore ad minus*), the ruling on the act of *inghimās* is permissible.

Just as al-Maqdisi and al-Shuʿaybi argued, al-Filastini acknowledges that martyrdom operations, if they are to be considered permissible, must possess a clear and certain preponderant benefit (*maṣlaḥa rājiḥa*) that fulfills the objectives of the law (*maqāṣīd al-Sharīʿa*).[86] The pursuit of such benefit demonstrates, he writes, that the preservation of the five necessities—which he ranks in order as religion, the soul, property, lineage, and reason—is tied to specific matters of lawmaking. Just as the *ḥadd* penalty for the thief (amputation) is mandated by the law to protect property, so, too, is jihad prescribed in order to protect religion (*dīn*). Just as al-Maqdisi demonstrated in chapter 4, the pursuit of this preponderant benefit results in a reordering of the objectives of the law (*maqāṣid al-Sharīʿa*) that elevates the preservation of religion ahead of all other concerns. Al-Filastini agrees with the other Jihadi-Salafi scholars that among the five necessary objectives of the law, religion (*dīn*) is the "most important" and takes precedence ahead of the preservation of oneself, one's property, one's lineage, and one's reason.[87] Religion is what provides the recognized benefit of preserving one's soul and, therefore, one's society.

Where al-Filastini differs from the other authors is in the emphasis he places on *istishhād* and *inghimās* acts of self-renunciative martyrdom in the service of a state. Martyrdom operations, argues al-Filastini,

> in all of their forms are lethal and devastating weapons to which God guides those struggling in his path [*mujahidīn fī sabīlihi*]. Neither the disbelievers nor the apostates possess them. The Islamic State put this weapon to the best of uses in its contemporary wars. With them, it laid bare the capitals [*amṣār*], liberated those in bondage, and guaranteed the justice of the Islamic caliphate.[88]

In this concise description, al-Filastini points toward the role of martyrdom—across his reading of Islamic histories and traditions—in the establishment not just of the well-ordered soul, free of the diseases of spiritual doubt emerging from worldly corruption, but also the conditions necessary for the establishment of God's ideal society. The martyrs, al-Filastini explains, are those who lead Muslims to the "frontiers of Islam" (*thughūr*

al-Islām), those regions where the corruption of the disbelieving world gives way to Islamic territory (*dār al-Islām*). In Islamic history, the *thughūr* were frontier zones established near the fortresses of the Byzantine Empire during the expansionary period. It is to those who have fought, struggled, and died on the frontier that Muslims should turn for authority and truth—locales about which ʿAbd Allah ibn al-Mubarak and Ibn al-Nahhas al-Dumyati wrote.

The traditional examples to whom al-Filastini turns to confirm this argument are Ahmad ibn Hanbal, al-Mubarak, and Ibn Taymiyya. In his *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā*, Ibn Taymiyya says: "The two imams, ʿAbd Allāh bin al-Mubārak and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and those with them, said, 'If the people find themselves in disagreement on an issue, then look to the people along the *thughūr*. The truth [*al-ḥaqq*] is with them because God says, 'As for those who strive for Us, We shall surely guide them in Our ways."[89] In citing this passage, al-Filastini continues to argue for the necessity of self-renunciation and battlefield experience. For him, self-renunciation through combat appears to transcend and supplant legal debates of the minutiae of doctrine; such experiential authority serves as a model for a successful campaign culminating in the control of territory. Those who risk their lives in martyrdom-seeking and *inghimāsī* operations are those who model for the society an ideal piety and affirm, through their performance, the truth of the state.

Al-Inghimāsiyyūn: A Public Performance of Communal Ideals

This theme of self-renunciation as tied to self-formation is featured throughout ISIS video media. Consider an example that emerged just prior to the escalation in the use of martyrdom and *inghimāsī* operations. The media office of the administration division (*wilāya*) that ISIS labeled Barakah published a nearly eleven-minute video titled "The Inghimāsīs—the Pride of the Nation" ("Al-Inghimāsiyyūn—Fakhr al-Umma).[90] Barakah corresponded roughly to the al-Hasakah Governorate in northeastern Syria along the border with northern Iraq and therefore was centrally located as one of the major sites of *inghimāsī* operations in Syria, resting between what would become the sites of the majority of ISIS-commanded *inghimāsī* attacks: the provinces of Furat (Euphrates), Anbar, Nineveh, and Dijlah in Iraq and the provinces of Aleppo and Khayr in Syria.[91]

At first glance, the film appears to represent a simple description of the benefit of the tactic that romanticized the overwhelming odds such fighters face in combat. As camouflage-clad fighters run along dirt paths and scale walls in training, the film explains that such operations are "those in which a person or persons immerse themselves into enemy personnel, who both outnumber them and are better equipped, with the objective of causing great harm."[92] The narrator explains that these operations are often undertaken against fortified objectives or targets of importance to the enemy. Yet the video is more than a simple recruitment film to obtain additional fighters. It offers the viewer an understanding of *inghimās* as an ascetical act that rectifies the theodicy of misfortune described in the Jihadi-Salafi creed and methodology. These fighters are engaged in extraordinary tactics, the film argues, but are doing so as acts of personal piety and self-renunciation that will result in the construction of God's ideal state.

The film opens with a quote from al-Zarqawi, which locates the acts of the *inghimāsī* within recent and distant traditions:

> To those of you who bear the banner, I say: Where are the lions of Anbar? Where are the lions of Salah al-Din? Where are the men of Baghdad? Where are the knights of Nināwā and the heroes of Diyāla? Where is the Salah al-Din of Kurdistan? Where are you, oh lions of *tawḥīd*, oh descendants of Khalid, al-Muthanna, Saʿd, Miqdad, and Salah al-Din? Where are the *muhajirūn*? Where are the *anṣār*? Where are the keepers of [*surāt*] *al-Tawba* and [*surāt*] *al-Anfāl*? Where are the people of the two *surāt*: *al-Fatḥ wa-l-Qitāl*?

The quote, which came from a speech published under the auspices of the Shura Council of the Mujahidin in Iraq on April 21, 2006 (Rabiʿ al-Awwal 23, 1427), draws upon the memory of the tradition of the Salaf by citing the first formative political experience of the early Muslim community, the *hijra*, where those migrating (the *muhājirūn*) were assisted by the *anṣār* in Medina. The companions of the Prophet who are mentioned—Khalid bin al-Waleed (d. 642, known as the "Sword of God" in Arabic histories and once commander of Muslim armies under the second caliph ʿUmar), al-Muthanna bin Haritha (d. 635 or 636, who played a major role in the campaigns that conquered Iraq), Saʿd bin Abi Waqqas (d. 670–678, also a major commander in the conquest of Iraq and member of ʿUmar's *shūrā* council), and al-Miqdad bin ʿAmr (d. 653–654, one of Muhammad's archers, a commander in Syria,

and also a member of ʿUmar's *shūrā* council)—all possessed ties to the conquest of Iraq and Syria and represented fighters who had migrated and gone forth to struggle in God's cause. Salah al-Din (1138–1193), the only noncompanion mentioned, was a Kurdish commander of Muslim armies against the European crusaders and, later, the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty.

Alongside these figures, the mention of the qurʾanic passages by al-Zarqawi frames his argument as an act of exegesis. The eighth and ninth chapters of the Qurʾan, *al-Anfāl* and *al-Tawba*, as we have seen in chapters 3 and 4, are often used and cited in conversations on jihad. The other two qurʾanic chapters mentioned, *al-Fatḥ* and *al-Qitāl*, are popular names for the first (*al-Fātiḥa*) and forty-seventh (*Muḥammad*). Taken together, the citation of these chapters connects a theodicy to a call to arms. For the chapter *Muḥammad*, al-Zarqawi likely would hope he calls to mind passages such as these:

> Those who believe and perform righteous deeds, and believe in what has been sent down to Muhammad—and it is the truth from their Lord—He has absolved them of their evil deeds and set their state aright. . . . When you meet those who disbelieve, strike at their necks; then, when you have overwhelmed them, tighten the bonds . . . till war lays down its burdens. . . . As for those who are slain in the way of God, He will not make their deeds go astray.[93]

As the chapter continues, the reader is told that those among the Medinans who shied away from the obligation to defend themselves against the disbelieving Meccans displayed a "disease of the heart."[94] In opening its video with the quote from al-Zarqawi, the Barakah media office offers a familiar formula. Fighting is required, though it may not be preferred, to shirk one's obligations to fight reveals a broader disease of the heart, and to fight is to rectify this disease and to take responsibility for the transformation of the world.

The *Inghimāsiyyūn* video represents a live-action demonstration of how the ideal subjectivity of one engaging in martyrdom-seeking and *inghimās* represents a heart cured of its diseases and placed in the service of the state. The fighters represent not just a well-developed and effective tactic for the state but also, as the narrator on the video declares, "hearts enlivened with the love of *tawḥīd* and the glory of being in a state of submission [i.e., a

Muslim], a soul [*nafs*] sold cheaply in the path of God."[95] The ideal fighter is one who possesses strong faith (*imān*), sound morals (*akhlāq*), and a love for sacrificing himself in God's cause.[96] Amid images of destruction, several masked fighters affirm their intentions, the soundness of the act, and their willingness to die in God's cause. Following a discussion of the legal arguments for *inghimās*, a recitation of Qurʾan 9:111 begins, reminding the viewer, as the fatwas justifying martyrdom did, of the divine purchase by God of the believers and God's affirmation that those sold will receive their reward. The benefits to be reaped are available to all, the video claims, who have migrated (*muhājirūn*), who aided those doing so (*anṣār*), and who fought as martyrs and *inghimāsī*s.

"Among the Believers": Gender, Martyrdom, and Sacrifice

There is a tie made between the act of performative martyrdom-seeking and the spiritual health of the soul within the state. Men and women both, in seeking to soothe these diseases, were encouraged by ISIS to emulate the models of those who had come before, not simply the Salaf but also other male and female faithful who had modeled the appropriate unity of belief and practice in al-Baghdadi's caliphate. In their public narratives of the discussion of martyrdom and renunciation (*zuhd*) for men and women, ISIS authors shape narratives that connect self-renunciation and fighting to the sustenance of the state.

Among the genres used by ISIS authors to shape these narratives were martyrologies. These must not be read as literal histories or, at times, even reliable biographies. Instead, as David Cook argues in his analysis of contemporary Jihadi martyrologies, "the martyr has a duality: his or her body has a location and a permanence, and, second, a permanence in the realm of hagiographical myth."[97] Such a duality allows for a form of discursive play by the authors commemorating their deaths. Thus, martyrologies as descriptions not only of how martyrs died but also how they lived allow us, Cook argues, to understand that "the martyr is a liminal figure, not subject to worldly whims and passions. His direction, foreordained, is toward paradise, and he is not focused upon the material pleasures of this world, such as women, families, and goods."[98] The martyrologies discussed in these selections from ISIS's English-language publications reveal to us how ISIS used various types of identities—those who migrated to the caliphate, those who could not, and

those who lived in Iraq and Syria and joined the caliphal project—to create for readers various identities they could identify with and emulate.

The series of martyrologies, "Among the Believers Are Men," took its title from Ibn Taymiyya's discussion of two qurʾanic passages:

> Among the believers are men who have been true to that which they pledged unto God. Among them are those who have fulfilled their vow.[99]

> Only they are believers who believe in God and His Messenger, then do not doubt, and strive with their wealth and their selves in the way of God; it is they who are the truthful.[100]

In his discussion, Ibn Taymiyya locates the passages within a broader conversation on the necessity of sincerity to one's claim to possess sound faith (*imān*). At the time of his exegesis, Ibn Taymiyya stated that he found himself surrounded by Mongol invaders who claimed to be Muslim but who had failed to uphold God's divine law. In these passages of the Qurʾan from the Medinan period, as in his time, "faith [*imān*]," he wrote, "was confined by God to those believers who were mujahidin, and whom He reported as being truthful [*al-ṣādiqūn*] in their saying, 'I believe.'"[101] The ISIS media representatives framed their situation as similar to that of Ibn Taymiyya. For them, those today who fail to fight and struggle in God's cause and in service to God's state but still proclaim their faith valid and full are those who remain incomplete, suffering from a disease of the heart. The nature of these diseases becomes clear in the examples of the male believers whom the ISIS authors list.

The "Among the Believers" series locates such "faithful" men among those who migrated to the state (the *muhājirūn*), those who strove for the state against its near enemies and assisted the *muhājirūn* (the *anṣār*), and those who swore oaths from afar and fought for the state until they were killed. They represent a youthful, transnational group of individuals. Some of them were converts from Christianity. Some were raised as second-generation Muslims in the West. All are praised for possessing what ISIS considers the techniques of self-cultivation essential to having a sound Jihadi-Salafi creed and methodology. They are praised for their patience in their *hijra* (migration) when confronted by security authorities at airports and way stations. For their biographers, such patience proves the qurʾanic claim that God provides for those who provide their souls in God's service. They are praised for rising late into the night for prayer and fasting—emulating what they hold as the

model of al-Mubarak and the early generations of Muslims who fought on the frontlines (*ribāṭ*) of the border regions (*thughūr*) between the Byzantine Empire and the nascent Sunni Muslim caliphate. They are praised for the manner of their deaths, with their colleagues claiming that they recited the *shahādatayn*—the two affirmations of faith in God's unity and Muhammad's prophethood—as they passed. And, unspoken but no less obvious, they are praised for being men among the believers.

The first example is of one who migrated. Abu Qudamah al-Misri and his friend Abu Muʿawiyah al-Misri, whose *kunya*s suggest that they were of Egyptian heritage, were said by ISIS to have undertaken the *hijra* to Syria in 2012 from their homes in West London. Both would eventually be killed by a sniper for the Syrian forces fighting for Bashar al-Assad. The story of their death focuses primarily on Abu Qudamah's path of renunciation, beginning with the death of his brother, Yasin, fighting in Afghanistan, and his leaving behind his pregnant wife and daughter in the United Kingdom "to fight for the cause of Allah and to seek the greatest of rewards."[102] The authors claim that he followed the model of al-Mubarak and other renunciant fighters.[103] Following the death of Aba Muʿawiyah, who was killed trying to save Abu Musa al-Jazaʾiri ("the Algerian"), another foreign fighter, during the month of Ramadan, Abu Qudamah began to pray in his supplication (*dūʿāʾ*) for martyrdom and returned again and again to the front, where he lived among those on the frontlines, which ISIS authors frame as in "*ribāṭ*," and provided them support. While stationed on *ribāṭ*, Abu Qudamah was struck in the head by a sniper's bullet while attempting to save a fallen comrade. The story reports that as he lay dying at the hospital, he continued to whisper the *shahādatayn*—the statement affirming faith in God and Muhammad's message—until he passed.

Another example, however, speaks to those who choose to remain in their Muslim-majority countries as an alternative to *hijra*. Abu Talhah ʿAbdur-Raʾuf Khadim al-Khurasani (or Mulla Khadim) was born in the village of Adhan in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. In the *Dabiq* article describing his life and death, the authors note that from an early age, he studied the Islamic legal sciences and later joined to fight with Muhammad ʿUmar and the Taliban, where he was responsible for local efforts to patrol and police public morality—an institution of *ḥisba*—and eventually became a field commander, until his capture by the United States in 2001. The United States held Abu Talhah in Guantanamo Bay until his release in December 2007 after US officials deemed him a medium threat of low intelligence value

who should continue his detention elsewhere.[104] During his time in Cuba, ISIS claims, Abu Talhah deepened his knowledge of Jihadi-Salafism, which brought him to abandon the Murjiʾi positions of the Deobandi *ʿaqīda* and led to his eventual conflict with the Taliban leadership after his release.[105] Having been demoted from regional governor to field commander by the Taliban, he filmed his oath (*bayʿa*) of allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and the caliphate of ISIS in 2014 and was killed months later in a US drone strike in February 2015.

The idea of the *anṣār*—those who followed the precedent, ISIS authors argue, of the Muslims who welcome Muhammad at Medina—is also well represented. Hudhayfah al-Battawi, who planned and executed the attack on the Our Lady of Salvation Church in Iraq in 2010 and who was involved in plotting the attacks on Al Arabiya television's Baghdad bureau and the Iraqi Central Bank, was upheld by ISIS as a man who had renounced the material comfort of his life as a dentist and sought "delight and relaxation in jihad" and "happiness" in his own martyrdom. Hudhayfah's journey began with his *bayʿa* to al-Zarqawi, who put him to work using improvised explosive devices against US and coalition forces in Iraq. Hudhayfah was described as "steadfast," and his transformation was attributed to his time in the US-run Camp Bucca prison, where Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was also held. While imprisoned, Hudhayfah memorized the Qurʾan, led prayers, fasted, and kept awake late into the night to pray and "strive to be close" to God. Hudhayfah was killed in an attempt to escape from the prison, but even his death was seen as an act of renunciation: married before his death, he never met his son. For Hudhayfah, the hagiographer claimed, "the worldly life, its pleasures and adornments, did not succeed in tempting him for even a single day."[106]

Perhaps the most infamous of all ISIS fighters in the "Among the Believers" series was Abu Muharib al-Muhajir, also known as Jihadi John, who participated in numerous public beheadings and executions along with his accused co-conspirators Alexanda Kotey and El Shafee Elsheikh (both of the United Kingdom).[107] Born Mohammed Emzawi in 1988 to a family of Iraqi Bedouin origin, he lived in Kuwait until his family moved to London in 1994. Throughout his childhood, his biographer claims, Emzawi hated London and its disbelieving residents, "whose customs were far-removed from the praiseworthy values he was accustomed to."[108] In July 2005, following the attacks on London, Emzawi attempted to leave the United Kingdom for his *hijra* but was confronted by agents of MI5 at the airport. In an attempt to fool them, ISIS claims, Emzawi followed the model established by the prophetic

narrations that "war is deception."[109] Forbidden to use air travel, Emzawi, along with a colleague, hiked across Europe in a *hijra* lasting two months. Originally fighting with Jabhat al-Nusrah (JN, later known as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham) under the leadership of Abu Muhammad al-Jawlani (b. 1981 as Ahmed Hussein al-Sharʿa), Emzawi swore his loyalty to ISIS following the split between al-Jawlani's JN and al-Baghdadi's nascent caliphate. While a member of ISIS, Emzawi was reported to have fought alongside several other foreign fighters, including Abu Muʿawiyah, but he also preserved a softer side, described as one of "mercy, kindness, generosity towards the believers, protective jealousy for Islam and its people, and affection towards the orphans."[110] Having been "given" a woman enslaved by ISIS fighters, he was praised by his fellow fighters for "donating" her to an unmarried fighter. He was killed in a drone strike in November 2015.

Another of the *muhājirūn* was Abu Jandal al-Bangali, who was raised in a prominent military family in Dhaka, Bangladesh. In his youth, his hagiographer claims, Abu Jandal was brought to the truth of the Jihadi-Salafi *ʿaqīda* and *minhāj* by listening to the lectures of Anwar al-ʿAwlaki. As with other ISIS martyrologies, Abu Jandal is said to have studied Ibn Taymiyya and Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab, who arose late in the night to pray, to fast, and to worship. From Bangladesh, Abu Jandal pledged his allegiance to al-Baghdadi and, feeling dissatisfied with proclaiming the truth of the caliphate to his friends, he made *hijra* to Syria. Like Emzawi, Abu Jandal had difficulty departing from his home country but was ultimately able to do so after forging a letter from his university stating his need to travel to a conference in the Middle East. While traveling, one of Abu Jandal's uncles, who worked in Bangladeshi intelligence, allegedly attempted to block his entry into any countries in the region, yet Abu Jandal managed to complete his migration. Upon his arrival, he immediately announced to his trainers that he desired a martyrdom operation.

Following his initial training, Abu Jandal was posted to the front (*ribāṭ*), where he fought alongside other Bengali fighters. During his time on the front, he was credited by his biographers with "always trying to distance himself from city life, preferring instead the toils of jihad."[111] After a few months of fighting, and having prayed to God for an operation, Abu Jandal was assigned as an *inghimāsī* in the battle for ʿAyn ʿIsa, where he was killed with the *shahāda* on his lips as he passed. In his belongings, ISIS fighters found the following message:

> This is a sincere message from your beloved brother living in the blessed lands of the Islamic State. Verily it is Allah's laws and the sacrifice of the brothers that makes a land blessed. . . . Four or five months ago I was in the same position as you. I didn't have any plan as to how to avoid fitnah (strife) surrounding me. . . . It is only the promise of Allah, the promise of that Garden in which rivers flow, that kept me going. And it was enough, inshāʾallāh (God willing).[112]

Abu Jandal closes the letter by recommending to his audience that they rise in the night for prayer, study the Qurʾan diligently, and keep up their physical exercise. As he suggests, the letter is meant to speak to those unable to make or prevented from making a migration to the caliphate as well as those who make the migration. The habits he suggests are meant to prepare the soul for fighting in God's cause and to strengthen one's ability to renounce material goals. The biographers argue that "one can see from his letter that despite being involved in jihad, one of the greatest acts of sacrifice and worship, he continually sought to improve himself and strengthen his relationship with his Lord."[113]

Abu Jandal was not alone in his admiration for and use of Anwar al-ʿAwlaki. Two Canadian brothers, Abu ʿAbdillah al-Canadi and Abu Ibrahim al-Canadi, both used the lectures before making their *hijra* to the territory of the Islamic State. In this particular martyrology, ISIS authors appeal to those who have recently converted, as both brothers were considered "open" to the *daʿwa* of al-ʿAwlaki given their "disillusionment" with Christianity.[114] As they gathered with like-minded friends, such as Abu Talhah al-Canadi (born Damian Clairmont and killed by Free Syrian Army forces in 2012), the brothers began their migration by traveling to Egypt. Hoping to leave amid the chaos of the protests against Mohamed Morsi, the brothers were detained at the airport, only to be released and complete their travel to Syria, where they trained with forces under the command of ʿUmar al-Shishani (the Georgian) and gave their oaths (*bayʿāt*) to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. During the assault on Kobane (ʿAyn al-Islam), both brothers were killed. As in the other biographies, the brothers were praised for their longing to struggle in God's cause, their willingness to help and aid the cause even while injured, their ferocity in battle, and their willingness to push aside material comforts and pursue the hereafter.

The Problem of the World (*Dunyā*)

Like the other Jihadi-Salafi authors discussed in chapters 1 and 2, ISIS authors present the world (*dunyā*) as an instrument used by God to test the soundness of the belief of the faithful and a challenge of the corruption of the heart (*qalb*) and soul (*nafs*). The martyrologies suggest that the best way to fight against the corruptions of the world is through performed acts of self-renunciation as modeled by those in "Among the Believers." Yet little is mentioned about how best to treat, so to speak, the ailments the world creates. In an article published both in its English-language *Rumiyah* and in its Arabic-language *Al-Nabaʾ*, ISIS authors describe the world through a series of prophetic narrations and a single verse from the Qurʾan.[115] The verse, from *Surat al-Ḥadīd* ("Iron"), which qurʾanic exegetes identify as either Meccan or Medinan or consisting of Meccan and Medinan verses, is a warning to the faithful to be mindful of their approach to the material comfort of the world:

> Know that the life of this world [*dunyā*] is but play, diversion, ornament, mutual boasting among you, and vying for increase in property and children—the likeness of a rain whose vegetation impresses the farmers; then it withers such that you see it turn yellow; then it becomes chaff. And in the Hereafter there shall be severe punishment, forgiveness from God, and contentment, and the life of this world is naught but the enjoyment of delusion.[116]

The temporality of the world is reinforced in the prophetic narrations, reproduced here using the labels ISIS authors gave them, as well as their translations with citations from their original collections:

> [The *Dunyāʾ*s] Value to Allah: "Allah's Messenger (may God's blessings and peace be upon him) said, 'If the *Dunyā* equaled the wing of a gnat to Allah, He would not give a disbeliever [*kafir*] a drink of water (from it)."[117]

> Its Danger to the Muslim Community [*Jamʿah*]: "Allah's Messenger (may God's blessings and peace be upon him) said, 'For by Allah, I do not fear poverty for you, but I fear that the *Dunyā* will be presented to you, as it was presented to those before you, so you would compete for it just as they competed for it, and then it will destroy you as it destroyed them."[118]

> The Prophet's Rejecting [the *Dunyāʾ*]: "'Abdullah ibn Masʿud (may God be pleased with him) said, 'God's Messenger (may God's blessings and peace be upon him) was sleeping on a mat. When he awoke, it left marks on his side, so we said, "O Messenger of Allah, if only we took a cushion for you!" So, he said, "What do I have to do with the *Dunyā*? I am only in the *Dunyā* like a rider who took shade beneath a tree, then went away and left it."'"[119]

> Warning against Loving [the *Dunyāʾ*]: "Allah's Messenger (may God's blessings and peace be upon him) said, 'Then, Allah will cast weakness into your hearts.' Someone said, 'O Messenger of Allah, what is the weakness?' He said, 'Love of the *Dunyā* and hatred of death.'"[120]

> The Muslim Stance: "'Abdullah ibn ʿUmar (may God be pleased with him), said, 'Allah's Messenger (may God's blessings and peace be upon him) took hold of my shoulder and said, "Be in the *Dunyā* as if you are a stranger [*gharīb*] or a traveler." And Ibn ʿUmar would say, "When you reach evening, do not wait for the morning. And when you reach morning, do not wait for the evening. And take from your health for when you are sick, and from your life for when you shall die."'"[121]

Without any commentary, we must speculate on the intention behind the citation of these texts. However, if taken together, specific themes related to the world, its dangers, and the believer's status within it become apparent. In these passages, the world (*dunyā*) poses a risk to Muslims because it is what changes and passes away. Note the imagery of the qurʾanic verse: the world is a diversion that, like a good harvest, will eventually become chaff. As a result, those who would place value in the pursuits of the world—financial success, business success, personal success—will see themselves lost within the world. Love of the world is a cause for personal weakness and stands in the way of the fullness of faith. Such faith is to be the faith of the strangers (*ghurābāʾ*) and wayfarers within the world.

The Response to the World: A Renunciant's Jihad in the State of God

The process of self-formation described in the work of Valantasis involves the preparation of oneself through self-limitation and self-discipline. In "Among

the Believers," ISIS provides models of how this self-formation might be performed through acts of self-renunciation meant to resist the diseases of the heart. Unlike an ascetical narrative, a narrative of self-formation assumes that all human action has a role to play in the construction of a broader society. Such disciplinary frameworks assign and align each believer within the broader society and also offer to the believer diagnoses for the causes of social ills.

In the narrative of the Islamic State, social, political, religious, and economic problems rest within the corruptions of the individual. Weaknesses of creed and methodology manifest themselves in social iniquity, political failure, and moral corruption. Within the individual, however, the specific locale for these disruptions is the heart, and it is the heart from which the Islamic State demands discipline. The heart guides and protects human decency and well-being. Citing a tradition from the *Sunan* of al-Bukhari, an article published in the *Al-Naba'* newsletter reinforces its claim for the importance of cultivating and maintaining a sound heart, one capable of experiencing the trails a faithful believe will faith while seeking to follow the prophetic Sunna:

> The Messenger of God, may God's blessings and peace be upon him, said, "What is lawful is clear, as is the unlawful. Yet, between them rests those things that are unclear and are not known to most people. He who guards against that which is unclear preserves his religion [*dīn*] and his honor from blame. However, the one who descends into unclear matters and into unlawful matters is like the shepherd who herds his flock alongside preserved pastureland—they are likely to stray. Does not every king have preserved pastures? God's protections involved limits that he declares unlawful. In every body, there is a morsel of flesh that, if it is healthy, makes the whole body healthy. Yet, if it is corrupt, it corrupts the whole body. It is the heart."[122]

A diseased heart, the article continues, is one that is beset by association with those who are unmindful of the truths of the Jihadi-Salafi creed and methodology, cannot resist the sins committed by oneself upon oneself in private, fail to control the wandering eye from viewing that which is unlawful, and neglect to remember God as one's soul becomes engrossed in the affairs of the world (*inshighāl bi-l-dunyā*).[123] Symptoms of such diseases include envy, obeying one's passions (*hawwā*) as opposed to reason, deception, pride,

and mistrust. Cures include holding oneself accountable for one's actions, averting one's gaze from that which is forbidden, acting selflessly for the communal good, being sincere in one's deeds, and growing in piety and repentance through remembering God, fearing the promise and threat of the afterlife, reciting the Qurʾan, and making supplication to God for aid, forgiveness, and strength.

Hijra alone is not a sufficient treatment for these diseases. What migration opens to the believer is the possibility for an ongoing discipline of the self within the institutions of the state. The question of ascetical renunciation and its relationship to political and religious authority is not new for Jihadi-Salafi scholars. As we saw in the discussion of martyrdom operations, the example of Ibn al-Mubarak became part of their performed memory of tradition within their renunciative martyrdom operations. After the declaration of the caliphate, however, the role of Ibn al-Mubarak's connection of renunciation to jihad grew in the estimation of the Islamic State, for the treatment of the diseases of the heart, ISIS suggests, is to go forth on *siyāḥa* in the cause of God.

Siyāḥat al-Jihād: An ISIS Monasticism?

Generally speaking, *siyāḥa* is often understood as "tourism," but for ISIS authors it often suggests a form of practical self-discipline. The nature of this disciplinining of the self within the state follows a pattern of self-renunciation meant to encourage a particular formation of oneself as a faithful believer. In their propaganda and messaging, ISIS authors argue that those who wish to be on the path of such a transformative spriritual practice in an authentic method modeled by Muhammad and his companions must first undertake *hijra* to the lands of their caliphate and then struggle in the cause of God. Amid this struggle, no matter whether in a home or garrisoned at the front (*ribāṭ*), one must struggle with one's soul (*nafs*) to remember God as one fights as best as one is able. Whether those individuals seek martyrdom, go forth as *inghimāsī*s, or remain at home to build and sustain the state and its families, the journey of each—if understood as acts of *siyāḥa*—will reveal the self-renunciaitive aspects of the transactional arrangement between the community of the faithful and God that ISIS authors trace through Qurʾan 9:111: "God has purchased . . ." In a citation of the *tafsīr* of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, for example, ISIS authors conclude that *siyāḥa* for the believing

Muslims of the caliphate includes fasting, traveling in search of knowledge and jihad, persisting in obedience, and examining the *siyāḥat* of the heart by remembering and loving God.[124] Yet the jihad of women, in this state, is not to go forth to fight but to travel in pursuit of knowledge and to draw close toward what God loves.

The idea of *siyāḥa* enjoys a particular linguistic relationship to monasticism (*rahbāniyya*). In the modern period, ISIS writers claim, unlawful innovations in the interpretation of *siyāḥa* and *rahbāniyya* have led believers astray into concerns for the world. There are some scholars, the authors suggest, who have allowed Muslims to believe that jihad may be replaced with *siyāḥa* as a form of "moving about from country to country, seeking recreation, exploration, or discovery," and therefore becoming explorers of "mountains, sunsets, beaches, and forests."[125] Note the condemnation of sensuality here. The authors argue that travel must not be for the sake of mere experience or for gaining knowledge or scientific insight. If one travels in such a manner, one will become lost in the "flowers of the life of the world," with one's heart and soul diseased by the beauties of life found in "food, drink, accessories, or comfortable living."[126] If one is to journey, one should do so within one's heart, toward affirming the truth of God's oneness and God's religion, and with one's person in migration toward the state.

An inauthentic asceticism, the *siyāḥat al-rahbān*, is, according to the authors, no more than making mere supplications of naive "dependence [*tawakkul*] and abstaining from nourishment and sex."[127] The authors identify this asceticism within the practices of monks who can be found across multiple faiths. Within Islam, the authors locate such erroneous practices within Sufi orders and the disbelievers among the *ahl al-kitāb* in the time of Muhammad. For men, a true renunciation, one that does not follow the model of other monotheisms, is the self-renunciation one finds in combat, stationed and arranged at the frontier—a status often referred to by ISIS authors as participating in *ribāṭ*. For women, however, their renunciation (*zuhd*) is different—it is a sacrifice of self in service of the family.

The Self-Renunciation (*Zuhd*) of Women as Jihad

While men fought and died in the cause of God, women were expected to remain in the home, upholding the virture of the family. In an essay posted online in February 2015, an anonymous author writing under the authority of

the all-female al-Khansaa Brigades—a force committed to patrolling private and public expressions of female morality within ISIS' caliphate—connected the theological commitments of ISIS to the credal principles of *tawḥīd* and *al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ* with the question of the status of women within the Islamic State's idealized *dār al-Islām*. The question concerning the status and role of women in an Islamic society, the essay argues, aligns itself with the broader demands and objectives of the Islamic society as a whole. An Islamic society established upon the prophetic and divine methodology outlined in the Qurʾan and Sunna is "disinterested in materialism and the sciences of the world because it adheres firmly to its religion and its understanding of the Hereafter—its people hunger rather than feel sated."[128] The builders of the prophetic society, the author argues, knew nothing of physics, engineering, or astronomy and lived in the roughest of mud-built homes, but they were righteous servants of God. Given this seeming rejection of contemporary sciences and rationality in favor of religious belief, the author appears anti-rational, if not antimodern altogether. Yet, the author is careful to note, the danger is not rationality per se; the danger is allowing the pursuit of rationality to replace the pursuit of authentic religious belief. A false civilization, one that depends on knowledge of the crude material world, will enslave Muslims into the servitude of material concern alone.

The idea of submitting human rationality to the primacy of religious belief and practice reveals how the reorganization of the objectives of the law contributes not just to the justification of martyrdom but also to the rationalization and bureaucratization of ISIS. As part of this process, ISIS authors worked to explain the role that women must play in the caliphate. As has been observed, this was a frequent dilemma for the Islamic State.[129] For these authors, women are equal to men in origin—both are fashioned to bring prosperity to the land—however, women "were created from Adam and for his sake."[130] Like men, the author argues, women must play a role in developing and refining a given territory so that the objectives of God's divine law are achievable by the faithful. What has prevented the realization of such a society before now, the author argues, is that "women do not find themselves possessing a real-life occupation that is consistent with their innate created nature [*fitra*]."[131] Such is the failure and the pervasive corruption of Western feminisms in Muslim societies, the author argues, where women declared their religious beliefs and traditions invalid and demanded of their governments and societies wages and occupations that would free them from the boundaries of being mere housewives.

A moral and just Muslim society will not arise, the author concludes, without the realization by women that their role and responsibility must be to establish just and upright households. The household represents the edification of the family and the nurturing of the next generation of the state. Thus, before the claim that women fighting might be permissible if conditions demanded their mobilization, ISIS authors in their Arabic- and English-speaking publications emphasized the role of women within the home as the emblems of pious renunciation and the models for future generations of fighters. In the April 2017 issue of *Rumiyah*, the ISIS English-language publication following *Dabiq*, an article discusses the appropriate models of *zuhd* for women within the caliphate as established on the precedent of the Salaf. Women, the author writes, are not to complain of the hardships of living with fewer material possessions. Blaming a world (*dunyā*) that corrupts the soul and the spirit, the article calls upon the reader to return to "the spirit of that first generation of zuhhad (renunciants), those who weren't deceived by this worldly life and its beautifications and comprehended that the way to be safe from it is abandoning what is in it."[132] Austerity and self-renunciation should characterize the homes of the faithful.

The home almost serves as another battlefield. Self-renunciation is the characteristic of a woman who will serve as a nurturing shepherd of the future generations of the state. In the next issue of *Rumiyah*, the theme of female renunciation continued. A mother, the text suggests, should "cultivate within her children that this *dunya* is a place of journey and that the hereafter is the place of permanent settlement."[133] By educating children that Muhammad is the "imam of all ascetics" who taught the Salaf that the "blessings of this world are transient," the authors argue that parents will affirm to each generation that the spiritual fulfillment brought by self-renunciation will never be achieved through a desire corrupted by the temptations of the world (*dunyā*).[134] Part of that affirmation includes children being socialized into appropriate gendered roles. Young men, the article says, should grow up in a home where they are accustomed to seeing weapons and equipment of war—tactical vests, rifles, bullets, grenades, and explosive belts—and are shown films and press releases of the victories of their fathers in combat.[135] Childhood, the article suggests, must be slain—as much as one fights disbelief or an enemy in combat—as an unnecessary attachment to the comforts of the world.

This family life of renunciation is patterned after what ISIS frames as its received prophetic methodology. Children are to be taught by the women of

the caliphate that the affirmation of God's singularity, *tawḥīd*, is the central pillar around which belief and practice must be arranged. Citing a tradition from Ibn Abi Shayba, the authors of *Rumiyah* argue that ʿAli ibn Abi Talib taught his children belief in God and disbelief in tyrannical powers (*ṭāghut*), and therefore children should be reminded regularly of their creed.[136] This instruction, however, should occur as much in Arabic as possible, as it allows them to "learn the affairs of their religion and mix and associate with the Jamaʿah (community) of the Muslims."[137] This would also allow the children to participate in rituals in the home with their mother, in which she is "awaiting the return of [her] husband patiently, anticipating Allah's reward, and making a duʿāʿ (prayer of supplication) for him and those with him to attain victory and consolidation."[138] A woman, in showing loyalty to her husband in his absence, assuming the roles of the household, and tending to the education of her children, embodies a form of renunciation that is meant to be seen as a complement to her husband's inner-worldly asceticism in combat.

There are times, however, when a faithful woman may need to depart from the boundaries of her duties in the home. According to the anonymous author of the al-Khansaa Brigades, there are three:

1. Individual jihad—if the enemy attacks her country, there is lack of able-bodied men, and the jurists [*ʿulama*] issue a fatwa, as was the regrettable situation of some noble women for the jihad in Iraq and Chechnya.
2. The pursuit of knowledge, and, most important, the pursuit of the religious sciences.
3. Seeking a female physician or teacher, but only if the principles of the Shariʿa are respected.[139]

The women who do go forth, however, are expected to maintain appropriate standards of modesty. Women are to abandon any public identity. In Raqqa, the capital city of the ISIS caliphate, women were fined, arrested, and beaten for showing more than a single eye or a slight bit of skin.[140] In sacrificing their public identities, women, it was argued, were helping to abolish the patterns and modes of life of the disbelievers and affirm the renunciative performance of an ideal spirituality.

Inside and outside the home, women were expected to find alternative means of joining the struggle in God's cause. One month before the women's assault at the police station in Mombasa, *Al-Nabaʾ* published a two-page

article, "Ya Maʿshar al-Nisaʾ" ("O You Assembly of Women"), that argued for separate modes of fighting and struggling for women.[141] The title of the article is a reference to a prophetic narration taken from the collection of al-Tirmidhi: "O You assembly of women, give charity—even if it is of your personal wealth—for you will be foremost among the people in the Hellfire on the Day of Judgment."[142] As the citation of the narration might suggest, the article established a clear delineation of the roles of men and women while struggling in the path of God. Much as men could enter into a transactional relationship with the divine in seeking martyrdom and *inghimās*, so, too, could women spend of their wealth in God's cause. Acknowledging that jihad, today, is an "individual obligation," the article argues that women of today—much like their ancient companions among the Salaf—were expected to exert their necessary and equal, yet complementary, roles in jihad. In particular, the authors of the article argued:

> That women have relinquished the jihad of the sword is of the greater good. God favored men for that. For her, there is a wide open door to the greater jihad of material goods [*bāb al-jihād bi-māl al-ʿaẓīm*] that awaits her exchange with her Lord—an exchange that will never expire. As *Shaykh al-Islām* Ibn Taymiyya said in his fatwas: "And of those who are unable to wage jihad with their bodies, but are able to do so with their material goods, it is necessary for him to wage jihad with those goods. . . . So, too, is it necessary for women to wage jihad with their material goods—therein lies merit for her."[143]

That same month, for the English-language publication *Dabiq*—named for a small town in Syria in which ISIS fighters awaited the climactic battle of the apocalypse—an ISIS author with the nom de plume Umm Sumayyah al-Muhajirah, or "Umm Sumayyah the Emigrant," wrote a multipage essay titled, "A Jihād without Fighting." Echoing the claims from *Al-Nabaʾ*, Umm Sumayyah argues that the ideal struggle in the cause of God—culminating, were God to will it so, in a martyrdom—is a struggle that is gendered. "When Allah obligated jihād for His cause upon his male slaves," Umm Sumayyah wrote, using "slaves" as a translation for "servants" (*ʿibād*), "and placed a tremendous reward in it not found in other duties, some women became jealous and envious."[144] Recognizing the frustration among her "sisters" at the doors of violent combat remaining closed to them, Umm Sumayyah

counters: "The absence of jihād and war upon the Muslim woman—except in defense of someone attacking her—does not overturn her role in building the Umma, producing men, and sending them out to the fierceness of battle."[145] A woman does not fight with assault rifles, explosive belts, or grenades but instead is expected to fight for a more just and Islamic society through "good behavior and knowledge."[146] It is the role of a mother to look after the "cubs of the Caliphate" and ensure that sons and daughters are raised with the knowledge of their coming role in ensuring that the state of the caliphate declared by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi remains and expands. This is to the greater public benefit (*maṣlaḥa*) of the state.

As the "mothers of jihad," these women served as the nurturers of the nation who were expected to raise the next generation that would preserve and expand the physical territory of the state. They were also expected to bear the challenges of the state in pious silence. One article for *Dabiq*, for example, encouraged women to tolerate the existence of slave girls (*sabī*) in the household—likely those taken and enslaved from among the Yazidi population in Iraq—as concubines to their husbands.[147] Claiming authorship by a woman (Umm Sumayyah), the article argues that these women are licit to the husband as spoils gained in war.[148] Women were expected to manage the household, including the slaves.

As ISIS-held territories in Iraq and Syria began to collapse under local Syrian and Iraqi resistance aided by international pressure, however, the language of *Al-Nabaʾ* shifted considerably. Slightly more than a year after discussing the Mombasa attackers, *Al-Nabāʾ* published a one-page article in its one-hundredth issue (October 5, 2017) titled "The Obligation of Women in the Jihad of the Enemies."[149] Opening with a description of women as the "sisters of men," the article once again affirms that women are those who teach men their most essential characteristics required for accepting jihad in the path of God: self-resoluteness and the need for both power and resolve. Yet in the next paragraph, the author signals that a change is occurring: "Today we are surrounded by this war against the Islamic State . . . and it is mandatory for Muslim women to do their duty, at all levels of support, to assist the mujahidin in this battle." This includes, the author argues, the need for women reflect upon their *nafs* individually and become women who struggle in the cause of God (*mujāhidāt fī sabīl Allāh*) so that they might defend their religion (*dīn*) through acts of self-redemption. The use of the feminine plural form of the Arabic for *mujāhid*, signals a provocative shift from the prior year's discussion of the "sisters" undertaking the Kenyan attacks. No longer

are they mere sisters, but women are made equivalent to the men as those struggling in God's cause.

To legitimate their acts of self-denial, the author argues, women among the earliest generations of the Salaf fought in battle out of their love (*ḥabb*) for spiritual reward, self-redemption, and self-sacrifice. These same qualities were proclaimed loudly four months later (February 7, 2018) by the Al-Hayat Media Center. In the seventh episode of its "Inside the Khilafah" series, which depicts scenes of combat alongside the experience of day-to-day life, the camera pans to a woman, dressed in a black abaya, niqab, and gloves that fully conceal her face and body. The woman charges up a small berm and blindly fires her rifle as the narrator identifies her as a "a chaste mujahid woman journeying to her Lord in the garments of purity and faith, seeking revenge for her religion and for the honor of her sisters imprisoned by the apostate Kurds."[150] A few scenes later, as the narrator identifies "soldiers of the *khilāfa*" driving through the desert, a translated clip from an unidentified speech of al-Zarqawi plays, "*Labbayk* (we are coming), O my mother! *Labbayk*, O my sister! Labbayk, O pure and chaste woman! By Allah, our lives will not be pleasant, our eyes will not find comfort, and our swords will not be sheathed until we take revenge for your honor and dignity." The contrast is striking. While al-Zarqawi is most likely addressing an all-male audience, exhorting them into combat against disbelievers who threaten the lives and purity of women, the ISIS narrator is explaining that it is the women themselves who are coming to attack those disbelievers and defend the dignity of the ISIS female prisoners.

Perhaps most striking about the "Inside the Khilafah" clip is that this mobilization of women as sustenance for the survival of the *dawla* is the film's portrayal of how an entire family must be mobilized, regardless of status, to the fight. Two men in particular are shown preparing for their upcoming martyrdom operations using VBIEDs. Each man kisses his children, instructs them to take care of one another and to take care of their mother, and then boards his vehicle in a caravan. The children, several of whom are in tears, are shown with single fingers raised in the air—a gesture intending a physical representation of of *tawḥīd*—and as the vehicle explodes in the distance, the narrator continues:

> They are the glorious examples in which the sons of the mujahidin take pride. Examples born of the tremendous deeds of their fathers, and likewise, the deeds of their mothers. With their pure blood, they stood firm

> defending *dār al-Islām* and established a case against those who stayed behind. And in this hour of peril, we ask Allah—the Almighty Subduer [*sic*]—to deliver His promise through the mujahidin as well as the oppressed, by whose deeds the *umma* will regain its honor, glory, and supremacy.[151]

Even in a clip in which women are finally shown in combat, the family unit remains a gendered exemplum of *siyāḥa* in ISIS' ideal society: men go off to fight in the cause of God, while women and children, held in reserve, are expected to prepare for the next generation of state-building.

Conclusion

The Somali attackers in Mombasa never traveled to the physical territory of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's caliphate. Had they arrived, and had they chosen to undertake an attack similar to the one they undertook in Kenya, they may have met resistance—at least at first. Later, given the stresses placed upon ISIS' state by local an international resistance, they may have been permitted to do so. Women, whom al-Zarqawi had once used in attacks, were eventually permitted combat roles, however limited. Had they been permitted, the Somalis would have likely done so only after having migrated to the state, renouncing their former lives, and committing to live a new life of contributing to the process of state-building: marriage, household maintenance, and raising the next generation to struggle in God's cause. They may have joined the all-female al-Khansaa Brigades and been tasked with upholding standards of dress and public conduct for women.[152] Perhaps they would have worked as recruiters. Perhaps they would have simply stayed at home.

The challenge of discussing foreign fighter mobilization and local supported for the caliphal project is due, in part, to the tremendous geographic scope of the movement. The ISIS caliphate claimed a global population. Fighters and supporters arrived to the caliphate from Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, the Balkans, Belgium, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Canada, Central Asia, China, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Macedonia, Malaysia, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Spain, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Trinidad, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Uzbekistan.[153]

While some women were kidnapped or tricked by family members into coming to Syria and Iraq, many of them, such as Shamima Begum of the United Kingdom and Hoda Muthana of the United States, likely willingly traveled to the movement to join. Preliminary research into the motivations for their departures from their home countries suggest a diverse number of push-and-pull factors.[154]

What unified these men and women, and those who met them in Iraq and Syria and assisted them, was their shared belief that an authentic life as a Muslim required the work to shape and construct a caliphate. Only within such a caliphate would they be able to uphold God's divine law and secure a safe and just future for their families. This required self-renunciation—for men a renunciation of the comfort of home for the brutality of the battlefield and for women a personal renunciation to raise and discipline the next generation of martyrdom seekers for God's state on earth.

Conclusion

"The Islamic State Is Remaining and Expanding": On the Collapse of the Caliphate

> The Islamic State is remaining and expanding! Remaining because the corpses of the martyrs built it, the [blood of the martyrs] nourished it, and by it the markets of paradise were granted in contract. Remaining because no amount of the darkness of the hateful could remove the dawn of the *umma* that illuminates the path of the faithful. Remaining because it is the *daʿwa* to the oppressed, to the tears of the bereaved, to the screams of the imprisoned, and to the hope of the orphaned. —Abu ʿUmar al-Baghdadi[1]

In early 2019, fighters with the Syrian Democratic Forces, alongside their US and coalition allies, brought an end to ISIS control of territory in Syria. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's caliphate, which once swept as a wave over Syrian and Iraqi territory equal to the size of Great Britain and once governed a taxable population totaling 7 million to 8 million persons, finds itself receding.[2] Looking ahead to such a final moment, US president Donald J. Trump posted on Twitter on December 19, 2018: "We have defeated ISIS in Syria, my only reason for being there during the Trump presidency."[3] While many commentators considered the proclamation premature, and members of the US-led coalition expressed their concern that the fighting would be ongoing in the years ahead, there is little public argument that this version of the caliphal project of ISIS is ending. But the question remains. Without territory, absent any institutions of state, will the Islamic State remain and expand?

When ISIS last faced defeat of this magnitude, policymakers and journalists explored whether this was the possibility of its final defeat. When I began laying the groundwork in 2007 for what would eventually become this book, ISIS did not exist—at least, not as it is known today. Following

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the death of Abu Musʿab al-Zarqawi in a US airstrike in 2006, rumors began to spread of a new leader named Abu ʿUmar al-Baghdadi (born Hamid Dawud Muhammad Khalil al-Zawi, 1959–2010), who had been selected by a committee of senior leaders among Jihadi-Salafi groups to lead the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI).[4] While Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri worked desperately to understand how Abu ʿUmar was selected without their consultation or support, US military officials—including Brigadier General Kevin Bergner—leaped at the opportunity to argue that ISIS leader Abu ʿUmar al-Baghdadi did not exist. Instead, the officials argued, Abu Hamza al-Muhajir (aka Abu Ayyub al-Masri, 1967–2010)—who was later killed while fighting alongside Abu ʿUmar—hired an elderly Iraqi voice actor to read the pronouncements arguing for the existence and persistence of an "Islamic State in Iraq."[5] The co-conspirators who had created Abu ʿUmar—co-conspirators whom US intelligence officials believed included Bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri—were part of a broader al-Qaʿida rebranding in Iraq that was meant to recover local support following the rejection of Jihadi-Salafi movements by the Anbar tribes, the so-called Anbar Awakening. In reality, Abu ʿUmar and Abu Hamza had infuriated Bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri with their dissolution of al-Qaʿida in Iraq and the Mujahidin Shura Council and absorption of both into the ISI.

In 2007, US officials expressed a cautious belief in the possibility of incipient victory. In the pages of the *Washington Post* in October, for example, a series of unnamed US intelligence officials confirmed that al-Qaʿida had been shaken by a series of what they deemed "irreversible blows."[6] While George W. Bush left office acknowledging the decline of al-Qaʿida's abilities to operate openly, he acknowledged in his final State of the Union address that though "our enemies in Iraq have been hit hard, they have not yet been defeated and we can still expect tough fighting ahead."[7] Over time and under a new administration, the confidence of the White House and US military officials grew stronger. Three years later, addressing soldiers and media assembled at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, President Barack Obama announced the formal withdrawal of US forces from Iraq, having proclaimed the achievement of "a sovereign, stable, and self-reliant Iraq."[8] Americans and Iraqis were encouraged to continue the work to heal the wounds and mourn the deaths of nearly a decade at war.

As scholars and journalists know—and as Iraqis, Syrians, Yazidis, and Kurds experienced—al-Qaʿida and ISI had not disappeared. Following the

deaths of Abu ʿUmar and Abu Hamza, leadership passed to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who began laying the foundations of the territorial caliphate currently lying in ruins. Yet even as late as 2012, Obama, having announced that al-Qaʿida was decimated, added that the so-called Islamic State in Iraq was the "jayvee"—a reference to the junior status of the movement relative to al-Qaʿida—in his administration's estimation.[9] With the Syrian civil war in full swing and media outlets and the leadership of ISI appending to its name a new territory—al-Sham—US military officials sounded a cautious alarm. In a privately circulated memorandum, Major General Michael K. Nagata, the commander of the American Special Operations forces in the Middle East, wrote, "We do not understand the movement [i.e., ISIS], and until we do, we are not going to defeat it. We have not defeated the idea. We do not even understand the idea."[10] In seven years, ISIS had passed from a figment of the imagination to an inscrutable foe—not only a militant movement but a functioning institutionalized bureaucracy possessing the capability to control an entire population. ISIS had remained, and it had expanded.

A State Built on Corpses and the Blood of the Martyrs: A Jihadi-Salafi State

Critics of this project might suggest that I have neglected to address the specific martyrdom cultures of Jihadi-Salafi, al-Qaʿida, or ISIS-related movements in Syrian, Palestinian, Tunisian, Algerian, and sub-Saharan African regions, among others. I agree. This work remains to be completed. What I have attempted to demonstrate here, however, is that if one sets aside methodological debates about Jihadi-Salafi geopolitical, strategic, and tactical thought and focuses instead on how Jihadi-Salafi jurists and partisans construct the legal discourse of martyrdom as a self-renunciative response meant to respond to the theodicy within Jihadi-Salafi credal positions, it becomes possible to understand the weight of Abu ʿUmar al-Baghdadi's quote—sprayed as graffiti on the side of an ISIS administration office for the electrical grid in Tel Afar: "[The Islamic State is] remaining because it is the *daʿwa* to the oppressed, to the tears of the bereaved, to the screams of the imprisoned, and to the hope of the orphaned."[11] The suffering of the faithful was built into the structure and institution of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's caliphate, and it is upon suffering, then, that it may yet expand.

On July 6, 2016, Al-Furqan Media of the Islamic State released a fifteen-minute video titled "The Structure of the Caliphate." The release came just more than two years after Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi ascended the minbar in the al-Nuri mosque in Mosul, which was known to locals as *al-Ḥadbāʿ* because of its distinctive architectural lean and which was later destroyed by ISIS during the Iraqi campaign to retake Mosul between October 2016 and July 2017. Prior to its defeat in Mosul, Al-Furqan worked carefully through films such as "The Structure of the Caliphate" to nurture a strong public narrative—at times realistic, at times aspirational—that the caliphate was successfully implementing its *dawla* program throughout the territories and populations under its control.

The film opened with a focus on daily life. Male adults pray in the mosque, kids play around fighters armed with light assault weaponry, taxis and cars flow by busy marketplaces. As these images played, the narrator reiterated the ISIS theodicy:

> No era had ever been void of a caliphate or imam until the people of Islam became squanderers, neglectful, chaotic masses—overtaken by tribulations and enveloped with hostility. The religion was lost and the lands usurped. But Allah sends forth for the *umma* at the head [sic] of every one hundred years a man who will renew for the *umma* its religion. Thus, the caliphate was announced and the caliphate given *bayʿa* after years of religious famine and political barrenness. So the earth yielded crops and became green. The caravan proceeded forth. The religion returned, and the sanctities were defended.[12]

As we saw in chapter 1, a Jihadi-Salafi theodicy often draws upon either the neglect of God's divinity—manifest through God's ethical and legal commands—or the use by God of those who disbelieve to test the faithful in their sincerity. Here the narrator emphasized the former: the faithful departed from their religion due to worldly affairs and became "squanderers" and "neglectful" of the wealth and the responsibilities granted by God. In this narrative, ISIS media claimed Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was one of God's promised renewers, those who fulfilled a prophetic narration that God will regularly send persons of extraordinary spiritual talent to sustain the Muslim *umma* in a time of need.

In the early years of the caliphate, ISIS media outlets emphasized a prediction made by al-Zarqawi that suggested the looming period of renewal might

culminate in an apocalyptic moment. On the basis of a prophetic narration of dubious origin, al-Zarqawi proclaimed that a climactic final struggle loomed between the state and the forces of disbelief aligned against it in the village of Dabiq just north of Aleppo, Syria.[13] In those early years, Dabiq became a rallying cry, even being used as the name of an ISIS English-language magazine until its later loss. Even then, however, the ISIS leadership pivoted its attentions to prophetic narrations about the eventual fall of Rome in its English-language publication *Rumiyah*. As William McCants noted, however, the apocalypticism itself was not a principal part of the ISIS narrative but was instead an instrument:

> The group is devoted to establishing an ultraconservative Islamic state at all costs, so it modifies its religious and political doctrines when they get in the way of that goal. The early Islamic State nearly destroyed itself because of the messianic beliefs of its founder. So the State modified its apocalyptic doctrine to focus on institution building rather than on the imminent appearance of a savior.[14]

The apocalypse was not the primary driver of caliphal ambition or institution building; instead, it became a rallying cry that located the work of state-building within a narrative of history. While awaiting the apocalypse, fighters worked alongside their families and bureaucrats while torturing prisoners and those they had enslaved to establish their state regardless of the consent of those falling under their governance.

Gradually, ISIS bureaucrats sought to replace Iraqi and Syrian civil institutions with a new administrative structure. In some cases, the replacement of Iraqi civil institutions with those of the Islamic State involved a quick erasure of the symbols of the former. As a temporary fix, any emblem of Iraqi ministries on buildings, stationery, or vehicles was deemed a secular corruption and was ordered removed, with all eventually replaced by material emblazoned with the familiar black banners or signets of ISIS.

The "Structure of the Caliphate" film demonstrates this gradual yet comprehensive replacement. At the head of ISIS sat the caliph, assisted in his affairs by a Delegated Committee and a consultative Shura Council, both of which were directly appointed by the caliph. On the caliph rested the duties of upholding and spreading the faith, defending the homeland, the fortification of the fronts (*thughūr*), the preparation of the armed forces, the

implementation of the *ḥudūd* penalties, the enforcement of legal (*sharʿ*) rulings upon the people, and the governance of worldly affairs.

Those who acted in support of the caliph were those who "loose and bind" (*ahl al-ḥal wa-l-ʿaqd*), whom the narrator identified as the Shura Council. These individuals were tasked with ensuring the execution of all caliphal pronouncements. Selected for their knowledge of the faith and their moral probity, these individuals were expected to possess the leadership and management skills needed to develop and maintain the institutions of state while also advising—and even correcting—the caliph. Cabinet-level positions, falling under the administration of the Delegated Committee, were tasked with protecting the rights (*ḥuqūq*) of the people. To do this, the cabinet-level positions monitored personal security (*amn*) as well as the public and private observation of religion (*dīn*) alongside its maintenance of public interests (*maṣāliḥ ʿāma*).

The creation of the Islamic State, the film's narrator claimed, required the development of management and governance techniques that made efficient use of the materials available to the caliph. The subdivision of the state into administrative districts resembled a loose federal system in which the caliph held singular control but entrusted an appointed governor (*wālī*) to oversee local affairs within each administrative district (*wilāya*). Serious matters were referred by the *walī* to the Delegated Committee. The film claimed thirty-five *wilāyāt*: nineteen in Iraq and Syria (al-Sham) and sixteen in territories outside of ISIS's contiguous territory (although this number would later expand to thirty-nine).[15] In theory, all of these administrative districts were connected by their local and regional offices to the centralized offices in the capital of the Islamic State. These offices were comprehensive in scope—covering administrative work, oversight of the jihad in God's cause, financial and economic issues, and public outreach.

Of course, the most infamous of the administrative divisions were the offices of public security (*amn*), soldiery (*junūd*), and war spoils (*anfāl*), all of which oversaw the strategic and tactical expansion of the caliphate and made provision for the offensive and defensive fighting capabilities of the state.[16] These offices were only some of the administrative divisions. Another included the offices (*dawāwīn*, sing. *dīwān*) concerned with day-to-day affairs. The Diwan of Judgment and Grievances (*Qaḍāʾ wa-l-maẓālim*) concerned itself with oversight of the state's officials, investigation into any malfeasance or corruption, the public implementation of criminal penalties, and

pronouncing final rulings on questions of jurisprudence.[17] Matters of public health, such as public campaigns against drugs, alcohol, and smoking, as well as matters of upholding public morality—including banning satellite television, policing standards of dress for women, and ensuring that businesses closed during prayer times—fell to the Diwan of the Hisba.[18] Finally, the Diwan of Proselytization and Mosques (*Daʿwa wa-l-masājid*) controlled the dissemination of theological literature and instructional pamphlets, oversaw the implementation of public lessons in Shariʿa and *fiqh*, and monitored the distribution of food during the month of Ramadan and for other charitable reasons.[19]

Among the offices that were more important to the day-to-day maintenance of the state's extractive economy, which focused on a rigid and expansive taxation structure, were those tasked with the administration of finances and the economy. The Diwan of Resources (*Rikāz*) oversaw the maintenance of ISIS petroleum resources, antiquities, and other mineral resources.[20] Agricultural concerns—including food security and the redistribution of land parcels seized or stolen from fleeing Iraqi and Syrian families—were monitored by the Diwan of Agriculture (*Zirāʿa*).[21] The Diwan of the Treasury (*Bayt al-Māl*) oversaw currency reserves and monitored the status of the economy—even attempting, in a project that seemed of limited scope, to place ISIS on the gold standard by minting its own dinars and dirhams of gold and silver, respectively.[22] The offices of Religious Endowments (*Awqāf*) and *Zakat* oversaw funds meant to be redistributed to the general public but also to those communities considered to be the most vulnerable: the impoverished, widows, and orphans.[23]

These administrative offices were all supported by various committees. The office on *hijra*, discussed in chapter 5, welcomed those who had "renounced the world," migrants to the state requiring assistance with their settlement. For those families with fighters who were either captured or killed, affairs were handled by the committee for the affairs of prisoners and martyrs. A few committees, about which little is known, assisted with the administration of distant territories. Perhaps the most wide-reaching of these committees within the caliphate was the one tasked with matters of theological and legal research and fatwa issuance (*buḥūth wa-l-iftāʾ*).[24] This was the office that produced rulings on the enslavement of Yazidi captives taken by ISIS and on the legitimacy of their rape and sexual abuse but also used its own interpretations of the Shariʿa to weigh the legitimacy of all of ISIS's internal and external actions.

The enduring legacy of the state, however, may arise from the products of its media and public outreach offices. Within this division, the Diwan of Public Health (*Ṣiḥa*) oversaw the administration of hospitals and medical colleges. Upon coming to power, ISIS had announced an entirely new medical program, a three-year, six-semester curriculum that segregated male and female medical students and eliminated studies of human evolution, culture, and "those superfluous subjects irrelevant to a physician's work."[25] The Diwan of Public Services (*Khidmāt*) oversaw the maintenance and provision of public utilities such as electricity and water but also ensured the removal of waste and adequate standards of sanitation. As one former truck driver stated to journalists after the return of Mosul to Iraqi oversight: "Garbage collection was number one under ISIS."[26]

The final two offices within the public outreach administrative division were the Diwan of the Media (*Iʿlām*) and the Diwan of Education (*Taʿlīm*). These divisions contributed more than any other to the idea of the *dawla* as a "state of mind" that would far outlast the territory of the state itself. While the other public outreach offices saw to the daily needs of those who found themselves under ISIS control willingly or unwillingly, these two offices ensured the circulation of a public narrative of the successful governance of state—regardless of the material circumstances of air strikes, military invasion, and horrific violence—while also teaching younger generations of the religious, theological, legal, and political platforms upon which that successful governance was based.

The Diwan of the Media was extensive. The central media office included Al-Bayan Media Office, the publishers of the *Al-Nabāʾ* Arabic-language newspaper, and the Zeal Press (*Maktabat al-Himma*), which served as the official imprint of ISIS textbooks. Other print media outlets included the Al-Hayat Media Center—responsible for the magazines *Dabiq, Rumiyah, Istak* (Turkish-language), *Dar al-Islam* (French-language), and *Constantinople*—as well as the audiovisual production offices of Al-Ajnad Media, Al-Iʿtisam Media, and Al-Furqan Media. Subsidiary offices in Libya, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Nigeria, Afghanistan and Pakistan (called Khorasan), the Sinai Peninsula, and the Caucasus provided material to the auxiliary media outlets of Amaq News and Furat Media. The production of these offices was so substantial that researchers will likely continue to uncover and review their materials for some time—not counting any ongoing productions. So important was the media discourse that ISIS considered its reporters to be among the mujahidin—those fighting and struggling in God's cause, all of whom were tasked with ensuring the survival of the state's discourse.[27]

Soon after ISIS expanded into Syria at the outset of its civil war, graffiti, media postings, and fighters on video all proclaimed that the *dawla* of the Islamic State was "remaining and expanding" (*baqiyya wa-tatamaddud*). Even as their territorial hold collapsed in Mosul and northern Iraq in June 2017, a month before Iraqi and coalition forces proclaimed Mosul liberated, Ajnad Media released a new *nashīd* titled "My State Is Remaining," in which the reciter proclaimed:

> My state [*dawla*] is remaining, firing toward the enemy
>
> Its soldiers shout that it is remaining, its path [*najh*] will not perish, its light expands evermore
>
> From God comes glory, so that darkness will fade. . . .
>
> The state of the believers [*dawlat al-muʾminīn*] is the fortress of the Muslims [*qalʿat al-Muslimīn*]. . . .
>
> By a luminous book [i.e., the Qurʾan], and the help of weapons, to the Omnipotent God its call goes forth
>
> My state [*dawla*] is indeed the saved sect [*al-firqa al-nājiyya*], its soldiers shouting, "Remaining! Remaining!"[28]

God's revelation (the Qurʾan), the righteous "saved sect," and the physical combat of the fighters of the state were tied together in order to reinforce the state's explanation for its success on the battlefield. As the "saved sect," the ISIS endured only as long as its fighters understood the tie between the revelation and action—a unity of the metaphysical and the physical. In the introduction of this book, I traced how the self-renunciation of the martyrs was referred to by ISIS narrators as essential to the formation of the state. In chapters 3, 4, and 5, I traced how the act of martyrdom, framed as an act of self-renunciation performed intentionally along the narrative of tradition for the benefit of the state, contributed to the delineation of gender roles within the ISIS caliphate. What would become of the martyrs after the collapse?

Well after the fall of Mosul and well into the continued contraction of the boundaries of the state, Ajnad Media released another *nashīd*, "My State Is Unvanquished" ("Dawlatī lā tuqharu"), in which the lyrics proclaimed: "*Takbīr!* [*Allahu akbar*, "God is greater!"] and rejoice, my state will not be vanquished. . . . My state's foundations are sustained by our blood."[29] Many audiences were skeptical of the proclamations of the poets. After its defeat in Mosul, ISIS would lose its declared capital city of Raqqa in October 2017. There was little sense that the state was unvanquished.

Following the collapse of Raqqa, journalists and analysts rushed to evaluate the impending (or already past) collapse of ISIS. US special presidential envoy Brett McGurk, echoing President Trump's sentiments, declared on Twitter that ISIS "once purported as fierce, [is] now pathetic and a lost cause."[30] Jason Burke, reporting for the *Guardian*, cautioned against any complete disappearance of ISIS but argued that if ISIS fails to "seize territory, they must rely on spectacular terrorism to mobilise and radicalize the world's Muslims, a long-term strategy which has had some results, but is of patchy efficiency."[31] Territory, most observers believed, would be the measure of ISIS's ability to expand or remain. Yet in the Jihadi-Salafi theodicy, territory is not a confirmation of success. Sustained belief in the face of adversity shown through the cultivation of a practiced self-renunciation is the metric by which the state will remain or expand.

Cubs of the Caliphate: Evil, Suffering, and the Future of a State

As we have seen in our discussions of theodicy and asceticism, however, Jihadi-Salafi discourses often emphasized the importance of the individual act of self-renunciation in the service of the community absent any specific territorial governance. In other words, the state would appear to be well positioned to sustain itself as an idea. Consider the Diwan of Education (*Taʿlīm*). This office was responsible for recruiting and training future teachers as well as establishing regulations for educational reforms that would bring the Islamic State's curriculum into alignment with its expectations of the Shariʿa.

At the height of their territorial control, ISIS media officials called to the faithful, those who might be labeled the "true believers," to join in the unfolding of divine history. Some who migrated hoped to participate in the construction of a caliphate. Others hoped that through their deaths, others would find new life in a tranquil caliphate. As the territory diminished, however, the narrative remained unchanged. It maintained constant proclamations of an ongoing, if not growing, confidence. The interpretative task shifts from not only how ISIS accounted for its victories and its losses within the vicissitudes of battle to also how ISIS accounted for the eventual total collapse of the caliphate within the broader symbolic narrative constituting its theodicy. If the *dawla* offered by ISIS is indeed an epoch and a turn toward governance that sustains and nurtures the true believer, then

the description of an Islamic State (*al-Dawla al-Islāmiyya*) comes to central focus. An epoch must transcend generations, and, as we saw in chapter 5, the gendered roles of men and women in the state were meant to secure one particular part of the community: the children.

Had the state held its territory long enough, students would have been expected to complete nine years of study: five years of primary school and four of secondary.[32] Students were also expected to pay fees for their education. One set of documents from Ninawa suggested that enrollment at the primary school cost Iraqis $12 USD per student, secondary school was $18 USD, and university education was $50 USD, a high fee for Iraqi families struggling with the extractive taxation schedule of ISIS.[33] Following completion of secondary school, students could apply for admission to universities, colleges, and other institutes under the observation and administration of the state. Teachers who wished to continue in their prior positions were assigned mandatory Shariʿa education lasting from two to ten months (depending on the status of their teaching certification prior to ISIS governance). At the conclusion of their recertification in educational methods that ISIS aligned with the "prophetic methodology," teachers were expected to file for "repentance" in order to complete their training. Repentance involved a public pardon from ISIS jurists and was meant to signal a purification of creed and methodology.

Even the schools were reconfigured to emphasize pedagogy as a commemoration of the memory of the Salaf. Primary schools were renamed and were gender-segregated. Girls' school names included "Aʿisha, Mother of the Believers," "Fatima, the Daughter of Muhammad," and "Hind bint ʿUtba" (who fought alongside Muhammad and the Salaf at the Battle of Yarmouk in 636 and was the mother of the founder of the ʿUmayyad Caliphate, Muʿawiya).[34] Boys' school names included modern jihadis, such as Abu Musʿab al-Zarqawi, but also historical figures, such as Usama bin Munqidh (1095–1188), a medieval Arab Muslim historian, poet, and fighter whose recorded historical chronicle of the European Crusades discussed the establishment of a Frankish presence in the Levant. Each named building conveyed the same lesson to the children: the importance of those ISIS believed to possess the moral uprightness of casting aside concern for the material world, fighting, and even dying in the protection of God's religion. To study in the school was to be prepared for one's future graduation and acceptance of self-renunciation as a performance of the memory of the traditions of the Salaf.

As part of its reforms of the educational system, the Diwan of Education also worked alongside the new press, Maktabat al-Himma, whose name was often followed in print by "Publications of the Islamic State" and "Caliphate of the Prophetic Methodology" and whose texts created an entirely new system of Islamic training (*tarbiyya islāmiyya*) in the Iraqi and Syrian curricula.[35] Many of these textbooks, though similar in content and style to those found in the educational curriculum of Saudi Arabia, emphasized a narrative of Islamic education that was meant to increase the student's understanding of the righteousness of ISIS's Salafism and its state-building project.[36] Books would open with quotes from Bin Ladin, al-Muhajir, and al-Shuʿaybi, among others.[37]

Consider a text meant to help students understand the benefits of physical education. Students were drilled in a series of calisthenics, aerobics, and team-building exercises that were meant, according to the authors of the textbook, to respond to the call from Muhammad outlined in a narration from the prophetic narrations collected by Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj: "A strong believer is dearer to God than a weak believer, yet both are good."[38] Throughout the book, physical exercise and development of the body are tied to the strength of faith and also to the strength of the caliphate to "remain and expand." Much as the blood of the martyrs—and their pious self-renunciation—were parts of the embodiment of the project of state-building, so, too, was each physical motion of each child in class intended to be a performance sustaining the *dawla*. In some schools, boys were required to receive primary training in weapons and explosives, and in camps such as in Raqqa, children were taught how to decapitate a prisoner by using a knife on a blond-haired, blue-eyed doll dressed in an orange jumpsuit.[39] In one primary-level mathematics textbook, images of SIG Sauer handguns and Russian-made PK machine guns were interspersed with more common images of animals and glasses left half-empty for exercises practicing volumetric measure.[40] In the course of sharpening their arithmetic skills, students were asked questions such as:

> In one battle, there were 275,220 heroes of the army of the Islamic State while the number of the disbelieving army was 356,230. Who has greater numbers and what is the difference in the strength of the forces?"[41]

Weapons, conflict, and death extended past the STEM curricula. A primer on spelling and counting, also fashioned as a coloring book for children, interspersed images of grenades, explosives vests, and rifles amid animated

images of airplanes, houses, animals, and humans. The Maktabat al-Himma publishing offices even released a digital short advertising a new application for cell phones and tablets called "The Spelling Teacher" ("Muʿallim al-Hijāʾ").[42] The artists decorated the animated virtual classroom with a curved sword, spears, and arrows. A shield rested to the right of the blackboard. On the left, a Russian-made Kalashnikov and US-used FN SCAR and M16 assault rifles lay against a shelf. The variety and order of weapons were intentional. Not only were Kalashnikovs, FN SCARs, and M16s captured by ISIS in the course of conflict with Iraqi and US forces—an attempt to boast about the spoils captured by the state in war—but the images, if read from right to left, also allow children and the viewer to see the visual narrative of ISIS's perception of the history of jihad: from the swords, spears, arrows, and shields of Muhammad and the Salaf to the current arsenal of the mujahid fighting in the cause of God and the caliphate.[43]

As the video continues, children are shown smiling and playing with their mobile phones. Boys and girls are present, but the girls, who appear to be of primary-school age, are dressed in black abaya and hijab. Although we are not shown live footage of the app, the children narrate their activities through a voiceover: spelling, matching letters to sounds, and spelling and voweling Arabic words correctly. In addition to seven spelling lessons, the app also includes twenty-five various chapters from the Qurʾan that remain unlisted but are meant to help students practice their memorization and recitation. The video concludes by encouraging viewers to download the app from their nearest media office.

In small increments, young students were conditioned by their teachers for a life of violent self-renunciation in the service of the state. With each app downloaded, each spelling test passed, each mathematical problem solved, and each calisthenics session completed, students were carefully groomed and conditioned to accept the necessity of ever-escalating acts of violence for the protection of their state and their faith. In December 2015, video evidence of this education approach emerged in a film released by the media office of the ISIS administrative district of al-Khayr, corresponding to the city of Deir ez-Zor in Syria. The video, titled "To the Sons of the Jews," purported to show testimonials of Syrians whom ISIS had accused of aiding and supporting co-conspirators against ISIS. Opening on a desolate plain beside a Crusade-era castle ruin, children are called from their desks one by one to take up a handgun, race into the castle, and execute bound prisoners. The last child to enter the castle executes the prisoner at close range with a knife

and then, we are led to believe, beheads him, completing his "lesson" for the day.[44] By the age of eight—or even younger—children with parents fighting for ISIS, migrating to the caliphate, or kidnapped from their parents were made to witness public executions, forced to watch violent ISIS propaganda videos, and at times expected to participate in public executions.[45] As "Cubs of the Caliphate" expected to grow into lions, they were taught the virtues of the martyrdom seekers (*istishhādiyyūn*) and self-immersing fighters (*inghimāsiyyūn*).

The blind obedience and strong authoritarian hierarchy taught to the children raised with ISIS's educational curriculum, especially for those raised as "Cubs of the Caliphate," were part of a broader process of socialization that was intended to create a new generation of fighters. I argue that this process may have fully realized Peter Berger's idea of self-formation within a countercultural state. John Horgan, Max Taylor, Mia Bloom, and Charlie Winter established that for the tens of thousands of children—if not more, the count being likely underestimated—raised within the territory of ISIS, many were encouraged to wear explosive vests and trained to attack soft military targets as part of a six-part process of training and socialization into the caliphate. This process involved the following steps:

Seduction—Initial exposure to ISIS ideas, norms, and practices through propaganda, peripheral participation in public events, and indirect access to personnel.

Schooling—Routine, direct exposure to personnel, accompanied by intensive indoctrination.

Selection—Focused attention from recruiters, screening for aptitude, and grooming for military training or other roles (e.g., spying).

Subjugation—Physical or psychological brutalization through intensive training, isolation from family, wearing a uniform, and deepening of commitment through acts of loyalty, sacrifice, and discipline; emergence of solidarity via shared hardship.

Specialization—Fostering expertise and exposure to specialized training.

Stationing—Role assignment and deployment, including participation in public events to recruit additional members.[46]

Studies of child psychology suggest that no matter how far a child moved through this programmatic trauma, any stage of this process of socialization may have been sufficient to have profound and lasting effects for generations

to come.[47] As a US Military Academy study concluded, acknowledging that decades of US and coalition war had contributed to a gravely weakened Iraqi society:

> Conditions and associated outcomes [of Iraq and Syria] are far worse than originally envisioned. Caliphate architects are intentionally promulgating a framework for radicalization and indoctrination (e.g., curriculum development, Cubs of the Caliphate) while actively cultivating local environments to further the radicalization process. The Islamic State is weaponizing children. Unless effectively addressed, this will represent a persistent capability that will transcend the careers of most working this problem set today.[48]

Setting aside for the moment the clinical policy language of the authors—the idea of Iraqi and Syrian children as a "problem set"—the dilemma that emerges is clear. Having been exposed to relentless training and unspeakable brutality, an unknown number of children in eastern Syria and northern Iraq may have been exposed to the processes of socialization that were meant to turn them, at worst, into weapons but at least convinced them that the dominant culture shaping and ordering their lives was founded upon an authentic interpretation and application of the Islamic tradition.

An Expansive Renunciation? Finding a Path for Theodicy and Asceticism

Research into the lasting impacts of the ISIS project of caliphal and state-building is just beginning. In tracing the relationship of theology to ascetical self-renunciation in this book, however, I have argued that the authors of Jihadi-Salafi legal and theological discourses will continue to position themselves in preparation to respond to feelings of homelessness and interminable suffering in the world. The bleeding wounds of ISIS fighters portrayed with Hollywood's sharpest filming techniques and aired online and on the nightly news across the world will continue to expose local and global audiences to such narratives of suffering and evil.

For some, these narratives have almost become generational. Since the Soviet invasion, if not before, generations of mujahids have passed on an inherited narrative of suffering and the solution of renouncing one's world and oneself to go forth and fight in God's cause. As Mona Hassan observes

in *Longing for the Lost Caliphate*, caliphal projects like those of "Daesh"—a term she consciously uses to classify ISIS's project in the pejorative—all signify that the caliphate is a "pivotal cultural symbol that Muslims have imbued with different meanings according to their particular social contexts, bound by distinct parameters of time and space. It constitutes a grammar that people readily identify and utilize to create new meanings."[49] The ISIS caliphate in Iraq and Syria, in particular, she writes, is

> [t]he product of a shattered and tortured Iraq, [continuing the] politics of fear, distrust, torture, and brutality that have been perpetuated by the country's ruling regimes since the late 1960s. . . . While unemployed former Iraqi army officers contribute extensive military expertise, infrastructure, and intelligence networks to the insurgency, the emotive rhetoric of a caliphate lures in foreign fighters who are sent off to the front lines of much older confrontation.[50]

Hassan directs our attention to the attempts by Hamza Yusuf Hanson (b. 1960), a cofounder of Zaytuna College in Berkeley, California, and Muhammad al-Yaqoubi (b. 1963), a Syrian religious scholar, to articulate meaningful refutations of the ISIS project.[51] Other attempts include an open "Letter to Baghdadi" signed by more than one hundred Muslim jurists, theologians, and community leaders as an attempt to refute the ISIS caliphal project and pursuit of violent struggle in God's cause on authoritative terms.[52] Though all of these attempts recognize the ineffable suffering that Muslim communities have experienced as a result of Western foreign policy debacles and Jihadi-Salafi acts of violence—martyrdom-seeking and otherwise—few address what I argue is the deeper and more profound aspect of the Jihadi-Salafi project: a practice of violent individual self-renunciation performed as an acceptance of a theodicial narrative meant to open the possibility of renewing a Muslim polity.

Imagine, for a moment, a child. born in Raqqa at the outset of the Syrian civil war in March 2011 amid the events of the Arab Spring. The child came under the authority of ISIS fighters—either through kidnapping or other means—and was raised in the caliphal capital. At the age of three, that child may have been given candy to celebrate the declaration in Mosul of the ISIS caliphate. At the age of four, the child stayed awake at night—perhaps terrified—with the sounds of air strikes night after night. At the age of eight, that child, having fled with parents, guardians, family, or friends to

southeastern Syria, would have witnessed the territorial collapse of the only state he or she had ever known. The child's birth certificate would read "The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham." The educational curriculum taught to the child—if there was any stable school—emphasized the need for pious self-renunciation in the service of the state. Yet with the territory of the caliphate wiped away, the child would be left to figure out: what now? In Syria and Iraq, communities will struggle with how to reincorporate children such as these, many of whom were orphaned or abandoned. What if these communities fail to help these children? What if the nation-states that promised aid fail to follow through? To explain all of the suffering experienced, perhaps the child will remember a theodicy—one promising the futility of national governments and patriotism—and will return to the memories of the destroyed caliphate, vowing to once again renounce any self-concern to secure its return.

In early 2019, Western governments, along with those of Syria, Iraq, and the Kurdish regional administrators, began to address the difficult question of what to do with the children and families of those who had survived the onslaught of the Syrian Democratic Forces and the collapse of the caliphate. Some governments, such as those of the United Kingdom, weighed stripping their nationals of citizenship altogether, as if they had somehow apostatized from the countries of their birth through their affiliation with a nonstated armed group—an odd parallel to the process of *takfīr* mobilized by Jihadi-Salafis against their foes. Until a decision is made, these children and families will remain in informal, open-air detention facilities inside refugee camps.

While they wait, the international community will debate how best to finance the reconstruction of Iraq and Syria. An appeal from the Iraqi government in February 2018 yielded $30 billion USD, far short of the $88 billion USD requested.[53] In Syria, the United Nations estimates the cost of the rebuild to be $250 billion USD—but with no agreement between Russia and the West on how best to finance it.[54] Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have suggested that they may assist with the rebuilding of Syria and Iraq, but it is unclear how much of the money will arrive.[55] With each passing moment, however, the child—born in Raqqa, living in a camp—will likely remain stateless.

There will undoubtedly be new theodicies formed and new calls for new forms of self-renunciation. As I write, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS, once known as Jabhat al-Nusra and Jabhat Fath al-Sham) finds itself among the few movements surviving the latest phase of the Syrian civil war. In its history,

HTS has had a fraught relationship with al-Qaʿida following its formal break with ISIS in 2013.[56] Yet with the collapse of the territorial remnants of ISIS, observers are already arguing that grievances of the Sunni communities in eastern Syria and northern Iraq will create active and ongoing opportunities for recruitment to HTS, al-Qaʿida, or other movements yet to be imagined.[57] Given the various movements discussed throughout this book, it seems likely that the circumstances of suffering and relative deprivation in Syria and Iraq—especially without external support—will create the possibility for children, like the young child in our example, to seek out new approaches to changing the narrative of suffering.

Must that path lead to martyrdom and violence? No. More than two decades ago, at the end of a campaign of violence waged in Egypt against both nationals and foreign visitors, al-Gamaʿa al-Islamiyya, one of the oldest Islamist movements in Egypt, which had once been associated with the assassination of Egyptian president Anwar Sadat, announced a formal renunciation of its violent struggle in God's cause. As part of its renunciation, it questioned the benefit to the public welfare (*maṣlaḥa*) such struggle caused. Reflecting on more than a decade of violence against the Egyptian state, the members wrote:

> Without doubt, after all of this long experience, it has been confirmed that all of this spilled blood and all these brutal battles have not served any legitimate interests to be mentioned. On the contrary, dozens of harms, all of which should have been avoided, have come as a consequence. The spilled blood and wasted souls of the sons of a single religion, not to mention the vendettas and mutual hatred that have filled their souls and the prisons that burst at the seams with youth; all of these things constitute a great harm. . . . Blood, effort, and money have all been spent to no avail, at a time when we need all of these in our battle against the real enemy at whose hands all of our Muslim peoples suffer and regarding the identity of which no one differs: poverty and underdevelopment! . . . And what about all the injustice and oppression from which we suffer? To this we say: Be steadfast! And we believe that the reward of steadfastness in such circumstances is more hope-inspiring and weightier in the scales of deeds on the Day of Judgment.[58]

This is a self-renunciation of a different sort. While the members of the Gamaʿa recognize—and affirm—that the objective of placing God's religion

(*dīn*) remains above all other objectives of the law, such a rearrangement need not lead to martyrdom-seeking or to the formation of a state. A true reckoning of the public welfare, they argue, must require a redirection of energies of the faithful into addressing social problems and considerations. In part, this involves dealing with precisely the structural issues that Jihadi-Salafis have used to frame their explanatory narratives for suffering and self-renunciation.

ISIS, like its Jihadi-Salafi predecessors, will remain and expand as long as the theodicy that it offers frames the narrative of the world surrounding the faithful and resonates with their experiences. For Jihadi-Salafis, nation-states are a failed project of disbelief, regardless of their military or economic power. The success of prior movements, stretching all the way to the companions and followers of Muhammad, forms a powerful narrativized memory of tradition that calls to individual believers to renounce their corrupt world and surroundings can affirm God's oneness through profoundly transformative—and destructive—spiritual acts. If one is to save the world, ISIS and its interlocutors proclaim, one must renounce it and pursue God alone. For those accepting this theodicy and answering the call of self-renunciation, martyrdom will remain the pinnacle of the faith, a certainty by which blood is transformed into political authority and good governance. Yet even in the midst of such certainty lies the mystery of divinity, for in the end, even they conclude, only God will know the martyrs.

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Appendixes

For readers unfamiliar with Islamic law and legal theory, the idea of a jurist issuing nonbinding legal advice, a fatwa, will sound foreign. Some readers may be familiar with the infamous "Rushdie Affair" that occurred when the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1902–1989) issued a fatwa accusing Salman Rushdie, an author, of apostasy and blasphemy for his publication of the novel *The Satanic Verses*. In the fatwa, Khomeini condemned Rushdie to death for his sins, leading many audiences to believe that all fatwas required such death sentences.

Fatwas, however, are rarely death sentences. Muftis, those engaged in the act of producing a ruling on the sources of Islamic jurisprudence, issue fatwas to answer questions spanning almost all aspects of ritual and daily life. Of the more than 1,500 fatwas found on the forum of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi's Minbar al-Tawhid wa-l-Jihad, a considerable number deal with family matters (marriage and divorce), the consumption of Western media and culture, and even questions regarding whether particular Internet usernames are permitted or forbidden.

The three fatwas presented and translated here provide an introduction to Jihadi-Salafi legal defenses of the use of martyrdom-seeking operations. Two of them, those by Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi (b. 1959) and Hamud bin ʿUqlaʾ al-Shuʿaybi (1927–2001), addressed the use of martyrdom-seeking operations during the Second (al-Aqsa) Intifada in Palestine and Israel following the condemnation of them as acts of suicide by the grand mufti of Saudi Arabia. The third, by the former grand mufti of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), Turki al-Binʿali (1984–2017), who wrote under the pseudonym Abu Humam al-Athari, was written almost a decade later. Al-Binʿali's fatwa represents a bridge between the earlier generation of Jihadi-Salafis, who shared sympathies with Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri's al-Qaʿida, and the younger generations who found the state-building project of Abu Musʿab al-Zarqawi and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi more attractive.

All three fatwas are tied by common themes:

- *Questioner/Questioned*—Each fatwa opens with a submitted question. Following general salutations, each mufti frames his answer as addressing a problem that Muslim jurists have not had to address before. Each admits that in his understanding of the law, completion by suicide is a grave sin but that "martyrdom-seeking" is the summit of the faith.
- *Sources of the Law*—Each jurist frames his response by citing from four distinct sources of Islamic law: the Qurʾan, the Sunna literature (consisting of narrations and actions of the Prophet Muhammad), the consensus of prior jurists (*ijmāʾ*), and his own attempt to use analogical reasoning (*qiyās*) to establish a linkage between prior rulings in the legal tradition and contemporary rulings.
- *The Question of the Shield and the Question of Inghimās*—The syllogistic reasoning used by each author touches on the question of the use of human shields and the permissibility of facing overwhelming odds in combat. In each case, the jurists argue that any innocent deaths must be proportional to the benefit gained by the attack.

- *The Question of Intentionality*—The muftis also emphasize that the criteria differentiating a martyr from an individual contemplating completion by suicide differs by individual. However, a martyr will intend only God and the protection of the faith in a martyrdom-seeking act.

For those familiar with Islamic law and legal theory, I have provided extensive cross-referencing of all of the qurʾanic citations, Sunna citations, and juridical citations to help identify the voluminous materials drawn upon by the muftis. As I argue in this book, such broad citation is an attempt to demonstrate legal authority and knowledge of the legal tradition to the reader. Finally, a URL linking to the original Arabic copy of each fatwa is in the endnotes.

Appendix 1

Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi: "Regarding the Fatwa of the Mufti of Saudi Arabia on the Matter of 'Martyrdom Operations' "

*Originally published by Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi (b. 1959) to his Minbar al-Tawhid wal-Jihad website in 2001 amid the Second (*al-Aqsa*) Intifada, this fatwa displays al-Maqdisi's response to the grand mufti of Saudi Arabia and his caution against the use of martyrdom-seeking operations and proclamations of martyrdom for those undertaking them.*[1] *Unlike his peers, al-Maqdisi prefers calling them "jihadi operations." However, those intending martyrdom in such acts differ from those contemplating suicide, he argues, in their attitudes both toward the world and toward God. These differing personal theodicies manifest physically in stark contrast. To defend the tactic of martyrdom-seeking operations, al-Maqdisi touches on the legal questions of human shields (*al-turs*) and immersion (*inghimās*) and resolves these questions with a discussion of the welfare (*maṣlaḥa*) of the community of the faithful.*

The Question

Shaykh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi,
May peace, the mercy, and the blessings of God be upon you,
What do you say about the fatwa, which the mufti of Saudi Arabia issued and published in the newspaper *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, that considered the "martyrdom-seeking operations" *[ʿamaliyyāt istishhādiyya]* occurring recently in Palestine as "suicide operations" *[ʿamaliyyāt intiḥāriyya]*—a form of self-killing *[qatl al-nafs]* and suicide *[intiḥār]*—and, therefore, illegitimate and not of the jihad in the path of God?

The Answer

In the name of God, praise be to God, and prayers and peace upon the Messenger of God and upon his family, his companions, and those loyal to him.

My righteous brother—may God preserve him, protect him, and guide him toward the victory of the religion.[2]

I received your letter, may God grant you His protection and His success, in which you requested my statement on the fatwa published by the Saudi mufti that considered the operations that occurred recently in Palestine to be "suicide operations" [*ʿamaliyyāt intiḥāriyya*] that are dreadfully close to being a form of killing oneself and not of the jihad in the path of God.

Know, may God be compassionate with you, that the presentation of this fatwa by the mufti was dismissive and reckless—especially given this difficult circumstance that continues to face the *umma* of Islam, which was subjugated under the authority that was established over countries, lands, and resources by the idolaters [*ṭawāghīt*] and their brothers among the Jews and Christians.[3] Their rule is by the man-made laws of disbelief [*kufr*]. They refuse to govern by the laws of God, and they obstruct jihad, or even prohibit it outright, when they write their constitutions of disbelief with the condition that "offensive warfare is forbidden, and defensive warfare is not permitted except per legal norms."[4]

For those reasons, let's consider the following points and commentary as a fatwa.

First: Cautioning against the Falsehood of Naming Them "Suicide Operations"

In doing so, one makes them equivalent to the unlawful suicidal act [*al-intiḥār al-maḥram*] that is cut off from the religion of God and is performed by one who either lives in distress and protests what God has foreordained or bemoans adversity, trauma, and physical injury. The threat against suicide appears throughout the prophetic narrations. Such a personal condition is wholly separate from the state of one who endeavors to wage jihad and fight the enemies of God by inflicting the greatest trauma within their ranks or by provoking the extraordinary feelings of fear and terror among them through these operations. As a means of explanation, consider the saying of the Almighty: "And among mankind is one who sells his soul seeking God's good pleasure."[5] Or the saying of the Exalted: "Truly God has purchased from the believers their souls and their wealth in exchange for the Garden being theirs. They fight in the way of God, slaying and being slain."[6] These are among the texts that exhort us to jihad, encourage us to be undaunted in the face of danger, and call upon us to offer our souls as a fair price in the cause of God.

It is obvious that these operations are heroic operations [*ʿamaliyyāt baṭūliyya*] which, when established upon the conditions authorizing a valid action, are the furthest from what is considered a suicide. A mujahid is utterly disassociated from an individual whose soul is sickened by a suicidal state of mind [*nafsiyya al-muntāḥir*].

Second: We Detest Naming These Suicide Operations, but Likewise We Do Not Call Them Martyrdom-Seeking Operations

Why? It classifies those executing them as martyrs. The Messenger of God, may God's blessings and peace be upon him, forbade decisively and with certainty our right to have that authority, as is seen in the *Sahih* of al-Bukhari: "Do not say the youth died a martyr."[7] Therefore, we ask God to place them among the ranks of the martyrs. There is no objection to considering the practices of the one who affirms God's divine unity [*muwaḥḥid*]

and who is killed in battle to be the practices of a martyr. We do not wash him, nor do we pray over him, and we bury him in his clothes because we grant rational preference to what was witnessed in the world.[8]

That being said, if they were undertaken by Muslims fighting in God's cause, then the divine law considers it proper and agreeable to name these operations "Jihadi operations" because they are among the heroic actions of jihad that heal the hearts of a believing people.

Third: Scholars Identify the Matter of the Shield [*al-Turs*] as the Original Case Addressing the Permissibility of these Operations

If the disbelievers shield themselves with Muslim prisoners, or even their own women and children, then, on the basis of necessity [*ḍarūra*], a faction of scholars permit the killing of those within the shield. However, this is regulated with conditions. If this is to be the basis for the ruling, it is necessary to evaluate these operations by what conditions the scholars used to regulate the matter of the shield or cases resembling it. These are:

- Abstaining from killing those within the shield is suspended during the jihad, as Ibn Qudama conveyed in the *Mughni* on the authority of al-Qadi and al-Shafiʿi: "There is support for permitting targeting them during war because abstaining from it means the suspension of the jihad."[9]
- It is not possible to reach the disbelievers and hit them without killing those within the shield.
- Or that the result of abstaining from striking those within the shield is a division of the Muslims, the defilement of their women, and the occupation of the country. One should therefore kill those within the shield.

If the matter is as our brother in Palestine describes, then today there is no way to pursue the jihad as God commands against the Jews and their terrorism except through these operations.[10] This is because of the strength of the Jews that they demonstrate against the mujahidin—for example, their security procedures and the collusion of tyrannical rulers with them. In this situation, one cannot say "abstain from jihad" when one is commanded to understand the jurisprudence of the religion of God and the objectives [*maqāṣid*] of the law.

While the need for that capability is essential, it must be achieved within a path that is permissible.

It is necessary for the mujahidin—as much as possible—to take advantage of the means provided by modern science [*ʿilm ḥadītha*] to fight the enemies of God, as is said by the Almighty: "And prepare for them what you can of strength [of arms] and horses tethered [for battle], frightening thereby the enemy of God and your enemy."[11] That means creating the greatest amount of trauma for them with a minimal amount of loss to the ranks of the mujahidin. The disbelievers bear responsibility for those whom they guide and command among them, especially the losses that come at the hands of the mujahidin themselves.

Likewise, it is necessary for the mujahidin to concentrate on military and security objectives, or anything similar that will cause extraordinary trauma to the enemies of God. Yet they must avoid intentionally killing children, those who are not fighting, or

those who are classified as never fighting in any fashion. The sole exception is those who are killed as collateral damage—while concealed, or in an explosion, or in similar types of fighting—whom the mujahidin are unable to avoid killing.

Most scholars are amenable to these operations given what Abu Ishaq al-Subayʿi narrated: "I heard a man ask al-Baraʾ bin ʿAzib, 'Is it your opinion that if a man were to carry himself against an enemy brigade, and they numbered among the thousands, that he delivered himself to his self-destruction?' Al-Baraʾ said, 'No. Self-destruction is the aim of the sinful man, who brings it about by his own hand, and says, "I do not repent." ' He continued, 'Neither Abu Ayyub al-Ansari nor Abu Musa al-Ashʿari, may God be pleased with both of them, condemned the man who carried himself, alone, into a colossal enemy and persisted against them until he was killed.' "[12]

They also take into consideration the story of Abu Ayyub in Constantinople when a man from among the Muslims carried himself against the ranks of the Romans until he was surrounded by them.[13] The people screamed, "May God be praised! Has he carried himself to his own destruction?" Abu Ayyub stood and said, "Oh people, you might recite the verse by this manner of recitation [*taʾwīl*]. It was revealed to us, the helpers [*anṣār*]. When God fortified Islam and magnified its victories, some of us said to others that we were content, except for the Messenger of God, may God's blessing and peace be upon him, who said, 'Our property will perish. God has fortified Islam and magnified its victories. Were we to stay on our property and improve, it would perish.' God revealed to His Messenger, may God's blessing and peace be upon him, the verse." And this is in the *Sunan* of al-Tirmidhi and was also narrated by Abu Dawud.[14]

The Shaykh of Islam [Ibn Taymiyya] said: "The four imams permitted a Muslim to immerse himself into the ranks of the disbelievers, even though he was certain that they would kill him, if it would be of benefit [*maṣlaḥa*] to Muslims. If the man acted believing that he would be killed for the benefit of jihad, then, if there is no other manner to do so and even though his killing himself is graver than being killed by another, this will lead to killing others for the benefit of the religion [*maṣlaḥat al-dīn*]. Defending against the threat posed by the enemy—the corruption of the religion and the world against which there is no other defense—is what is foremost."[15]

From the text of the *Siyar Kabir* of Muhammad bin Hasan al-Shaybani and the commentary on it by Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Sarakhsi: "Were a Muslim to carry himself against one thousand men, desiring to triumph over them or to harm them, then his action is indisputable because he intends to cause harm to the enemy. The Messenger of God witnessed one of the companions do this during the Battle of Uhud. The Messenger of God, may God's blessing and peace be upon him, did not condemn the act, and some with him proclaimed this an act of martyrdom after being given permission to do so. However, if he had not desired to traumatize the polytheists [*mushrikīn*], then his act would have been condemned, because he would have gone forth for himself, neither for what is beneficial to Muslims nor for what traumatizes the enemy. . . . Trauma is established as a clear condition for the permissibility of the enterprise. If one does not aim to traumatize, but still goes forth on behalf of the Muslims toward [the enemy] until his actions do traumatize the enemy, then there is no dispute in that if God Almighty were to will it. If he desired to inflict trauma by his action, then the enterprise is permitted. Further, if he desired to cause trauma in the enemy through the actions of another, or, likewise, if his action terrified the enemy and caused them to fail, there is no dispute on his act. Acts like these are the most preferred for traumatizing the enemy and they bring benefit to Muslims."[16]

Whoever calls these "suicide operations" does not have a comparative case. This is wrong, reckless, and illegitimate to the entire legal field of jihad.

Whoever threw open the limits of the field without constraint or set aside the regulations established by scholars acted hastily, pursuing enthusiasm and passion in his fatwas without any legal evidence.

Summary

Based upon the above conditions, these heroic, praiseworthy Jihadi operations terrorize the enemies of God long after they are complete. The mujahidin, fearing the cessation of jihad, continue to have need of them, especially following the ominous calls for surrender, the decisions of the United Nations requiring the prohibition of fighting, the criminalization of jihad and its classification as unlawful terrorism, and the drawing up of agreements among countries for security collaboration and strategic consultation against jihad and the mujahidin.

To conclude my discussion, I find it necessary to remind those involved in such operations to do the following:

- They must keep steadfast faith in God and seek out His pleasure and His glory through their jihad. Their intention in jihad [*ghāyatuhum fī-l-jihād*] must be to fight in the cause of God in order to make the Word of God highest.
- Their fighting must be under a manifest Islamic banner, neither of the era of ignorance [*jāhiliyya*] nor of those blinded.
- They must distance themselves from all that displeases and angers God, since He will grant victory to those who aid Him and He will abandon those who wage war against Him. They know that many of those who confront the Jews today in Palestine place no trust in self-surrender to God. Such proclaim publicly, "For God, and His religion, and His Messenger!" and they think that with these alone they will strike the Jews with stones, that they are mujahidin, warriors against the Jews! In truth, they are disbelieving combatants against God, Exalted and Grand.

God will neither grant victory to people such as these nor will He defend them from their enemies. Rather, they will attract only the anger of God and will be forsaken by Him. They are among the greatest reasons for the humiliation of the *umma*, the sovereignty over it declared by those descended from apes and swine, and their continued occupation of its sacred lands.

The jihad against the Jews requires one to wage jihad against their falsehoods and their disbelief [*kufr*]. They call one to repentance and to return to the true religion, but they are only persisting in their disbelief and their war against the faith. There is no difference between them and the Jews at the Hour of Judgment. They are an evil of the Jews and are the first to be fought in jihad.

We say this as those with intimate familiarity of the reality facing our brothers in Palestine. We do not speak from ivory towers that are far from the fields of jihad. We are among the first to offer sincerity and advice to the people of Palestine on the matter of jihad. We are not harmed by the dissension of those who disagree or the slander of those who are hateful who are not guided by any legitimate evidence or text from the religion of God and the Muslims. They are guided only by hollow enthusiasm [*al-ḥamās al-ajwaf*] and worldly benefits [*maṣāliḥ al-dunyawiyya*].[17] They desire to lead the voices among the

selection of fatwas that are in agreement with worldly politics and regulations and seek to please the general masses and the rabble.

In any case, I have provided a detailed discussion securing my answers to some of the questions that I have received on this topic. I am in Swaqa prison, which is well known.[18] Let Him release from it whom He wills! I have replied to those who would make these operations to be a forbidden suicide and also to those who would make these operations absolutely permissible without any principles. I explained the corruption of the inferences and repudiation of both sides. I recalled both here in the summary.

I ask God Almighty to grant victory to His religion, to grant strength to those who profess loyalty to Him, and to use us in obedience to Him. The blessing and peace of God be upon our Messenger Muhammad, his family, and his companions altogether.

Your brother, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi

Appendix 2

Hamud bin ʿUqlaʾ al-Shuʿaybi: "The Ruling on Martyrdom Operations"

Like al-Maqdisi, Hamud bin ʿUqla al-Shuʿaybi (1927–2001), a Saudi jurisconsult, penned this fatwa amid the Second (al-Aqsa) Intifada) in April 2001.[19] *Al-Shuʾaybi lacks al-Maqdisi's concerns about the use of martyrdom-seeking operations and the status of the martyrs. After proclaiming these martyrdom-seeking operations as something unforeseen in Islamic history, al-Shuʿaybi defends martyrdom-seeking operations by identifying evidence within the recognized sources of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*)—the Qurʾan, the prophetic Sunna, the consensus of the jurists (*ijmāʾ*), and finally, an exercise in analogical reasoning (*qiyās*). Noting the permissibility of immersion (*inghimās*), striking human shields (*al-turs*), and night raids, al-Shuʿaybi concludes that while the tactic may be legal, what truly separates a martyrdom from an act of suicide is the intentionality of the martyr to pursue a transactional relationship with God.*

The Question

To his Excellency, Shaykh Hamud bin ʿUqlaʾ al-Shuʿaybi—God preserve him from every evil:

The mujahidin in Palestine, Chechnya, and other Muslim lands have undertaken jihad against their enemies and subdued them through a method known as "martyrdom-seeking operations" *[ʿamaliyyāt istishhādiyya]*.

These operations are either those in which one of the mujahid fighters wraps an explosive belt around himself or those in which he places explosive materials in his bag, device, or car. Then he advances upon the enemy—their barracks, etc.—and appears to surrender to them. Finally, he self-detonates with the intention of martyrdom *[bi-qaṣd al-shahāda]* and striking terror within and traumatizing the enemy.

What is the ruling on operations like these?

Do you consider this action a form of suicide *[intiḥār]?*

What is the difference between suicide and a martyrdom-seeking operation?

May God reward and forgive you.

The Answer

Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds, and prayer and peace upon the most honored of the prophets and messengers, our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and his companions, altogether.

Before answering this question, it is necessary for you to know that these aforementioned operations are modern occurrences. There is no example of them, or manner of their implementation, found in prior times. Yet the scholars offered legal interpretations that they derived from sacred texts, general observations, events, and other situations similar to those faced by the companions. The Almighty says, "We have neglected nothing in the Book [i.e., the Qurʾan]," and, [as the Messenger said], upon him be prayer and peace, about the Qurʾan: "Within it, there is a clarification [*faṣl*] of what happens among you."[20]

If the mujahid purifies his intentions, then the aforementioned martyrdom operations are legitimate acts [*ʿamal mashrūʿ*] and are part of the jihad in the path of God and are among the most successful Jihadi tactics. Among other benefits, such tactics should be used against the enemies of this religion because of their ability to traumatize the enemy, to inflict grievous wounds and deaths upon the enemy, to propagate fear, anxiety, and dread within the enemy, to degrade them, to chastise them, to exact punishment against them, and to inspire and strengthen the hearts of Muslims while breaking the hearts of enemies and demoralizing them.

Just as the Salaf ruled upon evidence from the Qurʾan, Sunna, the consensus of the community [*ijmāʾ*], as well as analogous situations and events described here as they occurred, we will demonstrate their legitimacy, God willing.

First: The Evidence from the Qurʾan

1. The saying of the Almighty: "And among mankind is one who sells his soul seeking God's Good Pleasure, and God is Kind unto His servants."[21] The companions, may God be pleased with them, cited this to describe one who goes forth against an enemy that is greater in number, thereby endangering himself. This is following what ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab, Abu ʿAyyub al-Ansari, and Abu Hurayra—may God be pleased with them—said and as Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, Ibn Hibban, and al-Hakim confirmed.[22]
2. The saying of the Almighty: "Truly God has purchased from the believers their souls and their wealth in exchange for the Garden being theirs. They fight in the way of God, slaying and being slain . . . (to the end of the verse)." Ibn Kathir, may God have mercy on him, said that the majority of scholars affirm that it was revealed to every mujahid in the cause of God."[23]
3. The saying of the Almighty: "And prepare for them what you can of strength [of arms] and horses tethered [for battle], frightening thereby the enemy of God and your enemy."[24] Martyrdom operations are among the powers that terrorize them.
4. The Almighty said of those who negate covenants, "So, if thou comest upon them in war, use them to scatter those who will come after them, that perhaps they might be reminded."[25]

Second: The Evidence from the Sunna

1. *The hadith of the youth* [ghulām]. His story is well known within the canonical prophetic narrations, where he indicated the manner to those around him by which to kill him. Killed by their hands, he was a martyr in the path of God. This is a type of jihad. After his death, Muslims received a great profit and benefit [*maṣlaḥa*] because that country entered into the religion of God, saying, "We believe in the Lord of the youth."[26]

   The guiding evidentiary principle of this story is that this youth, as a mujahid, exposed himself to harm, and his doing so was instrumental to revealing a benefit to the Muslims. The youth taught his enemies how to kill him, as they would not be able to do so except by the technique that he demonstrated to them. He brought about the conditions for his suicide [*qatl nafsihi*], but he was forgiven that by the circumstances of jihad. This is similar to the mujahid in a martyrdom operation who goes forth for the benefit of the jihad [*maṣlahat al-jihād*]. This is the source of our making his action licit. Were a man to go forth, conscious of what God has promised, commanding [what is right] and forbidding [what is wrong], while also guiding the people to what is commanded and forbidden until he is killed, then he will be reckoned as a martyred mujahid and his example is analogous to the saying of [the Prophet], upon him prayer and peace: "The most meritorious jihad is a word of truth [*kalimat ḥaqq*] in the presence of a despotic ruler."[27]
2. *The action of al-Baraʾ bin Malik in the Battle of Yamama*. He carried his shield atop a pike and went out in force against the enemy. He fought until the gate was opened, and not one of the companions condemned him. His story is well known in the *Sunna* of al-Bayhaqi, in the *Kitab al-Siyar* under the chapter "Volunteering to Embark upon Fighting," in the *Tafsir* of al-Qurtubi, and in the "Lion of the Forest" of the *Tarikh* of al-Tabari.[28]
3. *Salama ibn al-Akwaʿ, al-Akhram al-Asadi, and Abu Qatada carried themselves against ʿUyayna bin Hasan and those with him*. The Messenger, may the prayers and blessings of God be upon him, said, "The best among our men is Salama." And this is agreed upon by multiple sources.[29]

   Ibn al-Nahhas said, "In this enduring and sound hadith evidence is given regarding the permissibility of one carrying himself against a greater group of the enemy even though it is obvious to his thinking that he will be killed. Since he was sincere in his demand for martyrdom, as was Salama bin al-Akhram al-Asadi, the Prophet, upon him be prayer and peace, will not shame him and the companions will not condemn his action. Further, in the hadith there is evidence for the desirability and merit of this action. The Prophet, may blessings and prayers of God be upon him, celebrated Abu Qatada and Salama for their actions, as was provided, for both of them had carried themselves against the enemy, without care, so that the Muslims might overtake them."[30]
4. *What Hisham bin Amir al-Ansari did* when he carried himself between the ranks of a greater enemy. Some of the people condemned him, saying, "He cast himself to his destruction!" ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab and Abu Hurayra responded to them, reciting a passage of the saying of the Almighty, "And among mankind is one who sells his soul seeking God's Good Pleasure . . . (to the end of the verse)."[31]
5. *Abu Hadrad al-Aslami and his companions*, numbering no more than four, carried themselves against a great army. God granted them victory against the disbelievers

[*mushrikūn*]. Ibn Hisham mentions this in his *Sira* and Ibn al-Nahhas in his *al-Mashariʿ*.[32]

6. *The action of ʿAbd Allah bin Hanzala al-Ghasil* when he fought unarmored in one of the battles and those who were armored advanced against him until they killed him. Ibn al-Nahhas mentions this in the *Mashariʿ*.[33]
7. *Al-Bayhaqi transmits in the Sunan* on the man who heard Abu Musa recall a raised hadith, "Paradise rests under the shade of swords." The man rose, broke the scabbard of his sword, fortified himself against the enemy, then fought until he was killed.[34]
8. *The story of Anas bin al-Nadr* on the matter of Uhud, who said, "I smell the fragrance of *janna*, then he immersed [*inghamasa*] in the disbelievers and he was killed."[35]

Third: The Consensus [*al-Ijmāʾ*]

Ibn al-Nahhas transmitted in the *Mashariʿ al-Ashwaq* on the authority of al-Muhallab, who said, "There is consensus on the permissibility of one exposing himself to death to rush the enemy while on jihad [*jawāz taqaḥḥūm al-mahālik fī-l-jihād*].[36]

Al-Ghazali narrated in the *Ihyaʾ*: "There was no controversy on the solitary Muslim who launches an attack against the ranks of the enemy and fights though he knows he will be killed."[37]

And al-Nawawi transmitted in his explanation of [Muslim's *Sahih*] the agreement upon exposing oneself to harm while on jihad, which he recalled while discussing the *ghazwa* of Dhu Qarad.[38]

These previous narrations are one-seventh of what we could transmit from the consensus on the matter which the jurists named in their books as the question of "The One Who Carries Himself against the Greater Enemy," or, as it is also named, "The Question of Immersion [*Inghimās*] within the Enemy," or "The Question of Intentionally Exposing Oneself to Harm while on Jihad."

Al-Nawawi said in his explanation of [Muslim's *Sahih*], in the section on "The Confirmation of Paradise for the Martyr," that "It is permissible to immerse oneself in the enemy when one embarks toward martyrdom. It is permissible without any disapproval according to a multitude of the scholars."[39]

And al-Qurtubi transmitted in his exegesis [*tafsīr*] the permission—that is, the permission for carrying oneself against the enemy—on the authority of some of the Maliki scholars, noting that they argued: "If one carries himself against at least one hundred, if not the totality of the enemy army, advances toward them, and it is preponderant within his thinking that he will be killed, but that he will also traumatize the enemy, or will influence the Muslims to their profit—then this is also permitted. And we say this on the authority of Muhammad bin al-Hasan al-Shaybani, who said, "Were one man to carry himself against a thousand disbelievers, while he was all alone, there is no injury in this if he was seeking to save [the community] or to traumatize the enemy."[40]

The aspect of martyrdom-seeking [*istishhād*] as related to the question of carrying oneself against a greater enemy and, likewise, immersion [*inghimās*] in the ranks of the enemy while intentionally exposing oneself to harm while on jihad is that it is applicable to the question of the mujahid who exposes himself to harm, immerses himself into a gathering of the disbelievers, and then kills them, causing casualties and trauma.

Situations and Events That Martyrdom Operations Reveal

First: The Question of the Shield [*Tatarrus*]

What if the army of the disbelievers shielded itself with Muslims? The mujahidin among the Muslims may worry that they will not be able to fight without killing the Muslims constituting the shield. Yet that is permitted.

Ibn Taymiyya said in his *al-Fatawa*, "The scholars agreed that if the army of disbelievers shielded themselves with Muslim captives in their possession, and the remaining Muslims feared harming them were they to fight, then they should fight even if this would bring about the deaths of the Muslims within the shield."[41]

Ibn Qasim said in his *Hashiyya al-Rawd*, "Half [of the jurists] said, 'Were they to shield themselves with a single Muslim, then it is it not permissible for them to strike. If, however, we are fearful for [the safety of] the remaining Muslims, then strike them, but they must intend to strike the *kuffār*—and the latter is without contention."[42]

When we face the question of the shield, the overt evidence suggests that even if we were to kill Muslims with Muslim-made weapons and at the hands of Muslims, this would remain permissible to ensure killing disbelievers. The association of the *ratio legis* [*'illa*] with the underlying characteristics shared by the tactics suggests that if killing and traumatizing the enemy is achieved only by means of killing those Muslims who constitute the shield, then the sacrifice of some Muslims may occur in order to kill and traumatize the enemy.[43] This is much graver than a mere departure of a single mujahid toward a martyrdom operation with a traumatized enemy set as his objective.

So, in truth, Muslims killing those in the human shield is worse, because killing another Muslim is a graver crime than a Muslim killing himself. For the former, there is injustice in killing others, and any disproportional harm caused will be measured against them.

As for the Muslim who kills himself, any harm he brings about is specific to him. However, he will be forgiven this crime within the confines of jihad. If Muslims are permitted to harm Muslim souls in order to kill the enemy, then a mujahid who harms himself by his own hand in order to traumatize the enemy is at most similar to, if not more favorable to, the former.

If one was to undertake a greater crime, and there is no shame at its audacity, then, *a maiore ad minus*, there is no shame in committing a lesser crime, since the objective of both is a traumatized enemy. As the prophetic narration says, "Actions are by their intentions."[44]

This is one response to those who answer the question of immersion [*inghimās*] and carrying oneself against the enemy by claiming that the one seeking immersion must be killed at the hands of disbelievers and their weapons. We say that the question of the shield suggests that one may be killed by Muslim weapons held in Muslim hands. Those killing Muslims within the shield are not classified with those who murder and face the hellfire.

Second: The Question of Night Raids [*al-Bayyāt*]

What is meant by these is conducting night raids of the enemy, killing him, and traumatizing him even if that includes killing those whom it is unpermitted to kill: the youth and women of the disbelievers.

Ibn Qudama said, "Night raids against the enemy are permitted."[45] Ahmad [ibn Hanbal] said, "There is no objection to night raids. What is the *ghazwa* against the Byzantines

[*Rūm*] if not a night raid?" And he said, "We do not know of anyone who abhors night raids."

The purpose of these texts is to demonstrate that if traumatizing and defeating the enemy make it permissible to kill those whom it is otherwise impermissible to kill, then, likewise, it is permitted to spend the soul of a Muslim mujahid whom it is otherwise impermissible to lose if it is spent to traumatize the enemy. No one would be permitted to kill the women and children of the disbelievers with any act were it not for the objectives [*maqāṣid*] [of the Shariʿa] and intention [*niyyā*] of jihad.

Summary

All of the aforementioned indicate that it is permitted for the mujahid to expose himself to harm in a martyrdom-seeking operation and to destroy himself for the sake of jihad and traumatizing the enemy. Were he killed by weapons in the hands of disbelievers, as the above evidence indicated in answering the question of exposing oneself to harm and through self-immersion [*inghimās*], or by weapons held in Muslim hands, as was shown in the question of the shield, or by his own self-provided evidence, as in the story of the youth, these are all equivalent within the field of jihad. As was shown in the Sunna, the circumstances of jihad, given the tremendous benefits, forgive many acts, such as lying and deception, that are otherwise not forgiven. One is permitted to kill those whom one is otherwise not permitted to kill. This is the fundamental issue [*aṣl*] within questions of jihad, and by this, martyrdom operations become an extension of this issue.

As for the question of whether a martyrdom seeker in this martyrdom operation is analogous to a suicidal individual [*muntaḥir*], there must be a distinction. There are differences between the two of these that prevent their conflation.

There is a difference between the suicidal individual [*muntaḥir*] who kills himself due to anxiety [*jazaʿ*] and a lack of patience or displeasure with his fate; or who objects to that which has been foreordained [*iʿtirāḍ alāʾ al-maqdūr*]; or who has a desire to hasten death or to avoid pain, terrible injury, or torturous agony; or who is hopeless for any cure to that which is incurable; or who has the same apprehension, desperation, or anger for anything else that does not please God.

And between [this individual and] the soul [*nafs*] of the mujahid who is involved in a martyrdom-seeking operation who is joyful, delighted, aspiring to paradise, to what God has willed, to the victory of the faith, terrorizing the enemy, and to jihad in his path—there is no equivalence between them.

The Almighty said: "Are We then to treat the submitters like the guilty? What ails you? How do you judge?" And the Almighty said: "Or do those who commit evil deeds suppose that We shall treat them like those who believe and perform righteous deeds equally in their life and in their death? Evil indeed is the judgment they make!" And the Almighty said: "Is one who believes like one who is iniquitous? They are not equal."[46]

We ask God to grant victory to His religion, to bring glory to His army, and to stifle His enemies.

The prayer of God be upon our Prophet Muhammad, upon his family, and his companions, altogether.

His Excellency, Shaykh Hamud bin ʿUqlaʾ al-Shuʿaybi
Safar 2, 1422 [April 25, 2001]

Appendix 3

Turki al-Binʿali: "What Is the Ruling on Martyrdom-Seeking Operations?"

The career of Turki al-Binʿali (1984–2017) as a jurisconsult divides into two eras. At one time, al-Binʿali, who was born in Bahrain, wrote under the nom de plume Abu Humam Bakr al-Athari as a member of the Shariʿa Council of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi's website, Minbar al-Tawhid wa-l-Jihad. In 2014, he left the tutelage of al-Maqdisi to pursue the second era of his career, as grand mufti of ISIS. While he was in the latter role, al-Binʿali did not pen a fatwa on the legitimacy of martyrdom operations—at least, none was identified amid documents scattered after the collapse of the territories of the caliphate. The fatwa printed here was penned between 2009 and 2015, making it almost a decade older than those of al-Maqdisi and al-Shuʿaybi. Uniquely among the three, al-Binʿali receives his question from a female questioner, Umm Abrar ("The Mother of Abrar"). While al-Binʿali touches on themes of a transaction with God, the martyr's intentionality, the human shield, and immersion, unlike the others, he writes with a style meant to overwhelm the reader with technical knowledge of jurisprudence, at times claiming attributions that may not exist. He argues with little commentary, preferring instead to allow his citations to create his argument implicitly. Arguably, al-Binʿali uses honorifics—"shaykh," "imam"—as means to connect his fatwa with those he considers authoritative. Note the absence of al-Maqdisi's arguments but the connection of his argument to those of al-Shuʿaybi, al-Khudayr, al-ʿUlwan, and al-ʿUyayri—all of whom he considers authorities for his ruling.

The Question

The Forum of the Minbar al-Tawhid wa-l-Jihad
What is the Ruling on Martyrdom-seeking Operations?[47]
Question 4569
My letter is addressed to our most excellent shaykh, Abu Humam Bakr al-Athari [Turki al-Binʿali]. I say to him:
Peace be upon you, I ask God that you are kept well and I wonder whether you could sort out in writing a response to the uncertainty surrounding the prohibition of martyrdom-seeking operations *[ʿamaliyyāt istishhādiyya]* or indicate for us the collected authors or books on this subject. A debate and discussion arose with one of the sisters on the ruling of the matter. I am still in need of additional evidence for its legitimacy and to respond to the doubts of those prohibiting it.
I seek a quick response from our shaykh—or another, if you cannot do so.
The Questioner: Umm Abrar[48]

The Answer: The Shariʿa Council for the Minbar

And upon you be peace and the blessing and mercy of God.
My sister, the questioner:

God has bestowed a blessing upon me. I wrote a short essay a few years ago about the ruling on martyrdom-seeking operations. I ask God Almighty to ease its dissemination.[49] Here I will summarize a few texts on the matter.

God Almighty said: "Truly God has purchased from the believers their souls and their wealth in exchange for the Garden being theirs. They fight in the way of God, slaying and being slain [*fa-yuqtalūna wa-yaqtulūna*]."[50]

Ibn Kathir, the pillar [of the faith], may God be merciful to him, said in his exegesis [*tafsīr*], "The majority hold that it was revealed for every mujahid in the path of God."[51]

Al-Duri recited the phrase, "Slaying and being slain [*fa-yuqtalūna wa-yaqtulūna*]," and one of our shaykhs said, "Is it possible for a man to slay while being slain?! Yes, it is possible! A martyrdom-seeking operation, for example," and so on.[52]

And God Almighty said: "Slay not the soul that God has made inviolable, save by right."[53]

Shaykh Abu Musʿab al-Suri, may God shatter his shackles, said:

> I asked shaykh ʿAbd al-Qadir bin ʿabd al-ʿAziz [Sayyid Imam, or Dr. Fadl], may God grant him relief, about the ruling on martyrdom operations. He said to me, "Its permissibility had not been seen because no explicit textual evidence was found that would differentiate it from the ruling on suicide. There was considerable thought about it. Then evidence permitting it was found in the saying of the Almighty, 'Slay not the soul that God has made inviolable, save by right.' Jihad against one's enemies and causing them vexation is among the most righteous of rights."
>
> I consider this piece of evidence that he provided to be among the clearest that gives guidance on martyrdom operations in their modern form. Especially in view of the fact that it was, in the discussions of the ancients, a man's departure toward self-immersion [*inghimās*] in the ranks of the enemy—even though he is certain that he will be destroyed. Yet the man is killed at the hands of the enemy, as in the text from which our shaykh sought guidance. It is universal.[54]

And Almighty God said: "And among mankind is one who sells his soul seeking God's Good Pleasure, and God is kind unto His servants."[55] He revealed it to the companions [*ṣaḥāba*], may God be pleased with them, about one who carries himself alone against a greater number of the enemy, exposing himself to harm by doing so, as ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, Abu Hurayra, may God be pleased with them, said, and as Abu Dawud and al-Tirmidhi narrated, and Ibn Hibban and al-Hakim affirmed (cf. the *tafsīr* of al-Qurtubi).[56]

Ibn Abi Shayba in his *Mussanaf* and al-Bayhaqi in his *Sunan* narrated that Hisham bin ʿAmir al-Ansari, may God be pleased with him, carried himself between two rows of a larger enemy force. A few of the people condemned his act, saying, "He threw himself to his destruction!" ʿUmar bin al-Khattab and Abu Hurayra, may God be pleased with both of them, responded to them by quoting the saying of the Almighty, "And among mankind is one who sells . . . (to the end of the verse)."[57]

Al-Qurtubi narrated in his exegesis [*tafsīr*] that this verse was revealed for those who plunge into fighting, and then he retold the story of Abu Ayyub.[58]

God Almighty said, "And prepare for them what you can of strength [of arms] and horses tethered [for battle], frightening thereby the enemy of God and your enemy."[59]

Imam al-Jassas, may God have mercy on him, said, on the authority of Muhammad bin al-Hasan al-Shaybani, the companion of Abu Hanifa: "If a man, all alone, were to carry himself against a thousand men, there is no dispute on that if he desired [his]

salvation or vexation [of the enemy]. If he did not aspire to salvation or vexation, but he, through his act, guided Muslims to do what he did, and they fight and cause the enemy vexation, then there is no dispute on that, either, God willing. If he did not aspire to either salvation or vexation, but he terrorized the enemy, then there is no dispute in that, because that is the most preferred form of vexation since it benefits Muslims." Al-Jassas agreed with this view, saying, "And what Muhammad said on these circumstances is correct."[60]

Shaykh Hamud bin ʿUqlaʾ al-Shuʿaybi, may God have mercy on him, said, "Martyrdom operations are among the powers that terrorize them."[61]

Likewise, among the evidence is the story of the "Youth and the King," which is very well known, which was narrated by al-Bukhari, Muslim [al-Hajjaj], and those who witnessed it: "'Then the youth was brought to [the king] and [the king] said to him, 'Renounce your religion [*dīn*].' [The youth] refused. He turned [the youth] over to a group of his companions, saying, 'Take the youth to some mountain. Make him climb the mountain and when he reaches its summit demand that he renounce his religion. If he refuses, throw him off of the cliff.' So they took [the boy] and made him climb the mountain. As he climbed, the youth said, 'God, protect me from them, as You would will. The mountain began to tremble beneath them, and the group fell from its face. [The youth] returned, walking to the king. The king said, 'What happened to your companions?' [The youth] responded, 'God protected me from them.' Once again, [the king] turned the boy over to a group of his companions, saying, 'Take him and place him in a small boat, sailing him out into the middle of the sea. Once there, demand that he renounce his religion. If he refuses, throw him overboard.' So they took [the youth], and he said, 'God, protect me from them, as You would will.' The boat capsized, and they drowned at sea. [The youth] returned, walking to the king. The king said to him, 'What happened to your companions?' [The youth] responded, 'God protected me from them,' and he continued, 'You will not be able to kill me unless you do what I command of you.' [The king] said, 'And what is that?' [The boy] responded, 'Gather the people together upon a single plain. Crucify me upon the trunk of a tree. Then take an arrow from my quiver and place it in the center of the bow. Next, say, "In the name of God, the Lord of the youth." Then shoot me. If you do exactly as I say, that will kill me.' So the king gathered the people together upon a single plain, he crucified [the youth] upon the trunk of the tree, he took an arrow from his quiver, he placed the arrow in the center of the bow, he said, "In the name of God, the Lord of the youth," and then he shot him. The arrow struck [the youth] in the temple. [The king] placed his hand upon [the youth's] temple where the arrow had struck, and [the youth] died. The people proclaimed, 'We believe in the Lord of the youth! We believe in the Lord of the youth! We believe in the Lord of the youth!' [A man] came forth to the king, saying, 'Do you not see that God has brought forth, through you, what you had hoped to avert? Your wariness has caused them to believe!' The king ordered trenches to be dug along the widest points on the road. Once dug, they were set ablaze. [The king] said [to them], 'Whoever does not renounce his religion, throw them in the fire or tell them to leap into it.' They became hostile with one another, and began to shove and push one another until a woman came, along with her child, who hesitated to jump into the fire. The child said to her, 'Oh, my mother, endure [*iṣbirī*] this, for you proceed along the truth [*al-ḥaqq*].'"[62]

There are two issues underlying the intent of this evidence:

First: The youth indicates the method to kill him to the king, since he had not and would not have been able to kill him had the youth not provided him with the information. The

scholars [*fuqahāʾ*] said, "The evidence suggesting his 'suicide' [*qatl nafsihi*] is that it was as if he was fighting."[63]

The shaykh of Islam, Ibn Taymiyya, may God have mercy upon him, said, "And among the [evidence] is that the youth commanded his own suicide [*qatl nafsihi*] for the benefit of making the religion triumph. Because of this, the four scholars praised the immersion of a Muslim into the ranks of the disbelievers, even if he was certain that they would kill him, since this would benefit the Muslims [*maṣlaha li-l-muslimīn*]."[64]

Our shaykh, the transmitter of hadith, Sulayman al-ʿUlwan, may God free him from his bonds, said, "'Umar said, 'Were the people of Sanaa to support killing a single man in order to prevent their being killed in their entirety, then the rationale for this rests with the one enacting it.' The companions, may God be pleased with them, had immersed themselves into the enemy, bringing about their own deaths [*yatasabbibūna fī qatl anfusihim*], and the rationale for that rested with the one enacting it."[65]

The youth assisted his own killing, and the purpose of that was to restore the religion [*iḥyāʾ al-dīn*]. This gives evidence to the permissibility of the mujahid to seek out his own death for the benefit of the more preponderant struggle.[66]

Second: As for the narration saying, "They became agitated with one another, and began to shove and push one another." That means that they were bringing themselves, by their own will, to the fire. How could they be considered suicidal?[67]

Ahmad [ibn Hanbal] in his *Musnad* and Ibn Maja in his *Sunan*, may God be pleased with both of them, reported a raised narration [*marfūʿ*] on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbas: "During the night journey [*Isrāʾ*], I came across a pleasant fragrance. I said, 'Jibril, what is this fragrance?' He said, 'This is the smell of the handmaiden of the daughter of Pharaoh and her children.' I said, 'What was the matter?' He said, 'As she brushed the hair of the daughter of Pharaoh, the brush fell from her hand, and she said, "In the name of God." The daughter of Pharaoh said, "My father?" She responded, "No, my Lord, your Lord, and the Lord of your father is God." [The daughter of Pharaoh] said, "You have a Lord other than my father?" [The handmaiden] said, "Yes." [The daughter of Pharaoh] said, "Will you teach me about Him?" [The handmaiden] said, "Yes." So [the handmaiden] taught the [daughter of Pharaoh] about Him. [Pharaoh] summoned her, saying, "Woman! Have you a Lord other than me?" [The handmaiden] responded, "Yes, my Lord and your Lord is God, who created the heavens." Pharaoh commanded a cow to be cast in brass. He took her children before the cow, one by one. [The handmaiden] said, "I have something to ask of you." [Pharaoh] said, "What is it?" She said, "I would love for my bones to be gathered with the bones of my son in a single shroud, so that we may be buried together." [Pharaoh] said, "That which is yours is a right [*ḥaqq*] you have against us." Her children continued to be brought before the cow, until finally a son, whom she was nursing, was brought. She seemed to pause on his behalf. He said to her, "Mother, release me. The torture of this world is less painful than that of the Hereafter." So she released him.'"[68]

The rational intent of this evidence is in the saying, "Release me. . . . So she released him." How is that suicide? Were they not also casting her into the fire? She, herself, brought herself to her death to achieve the same goal sought by the companions of the trench. However, she rationalized the killing of her children with her insistence that this would make the faith [*imān*] manifest, would challenge the tyrant [*ṭaghūt*], and would cause the glory of monotheism [*tawḥīd*] to loom before him.

It is correct to say that the law revealed before us applies to us. It does not differ from our law.[69]

There is nothing that contradicts this action in our law. Just as our shaykh, the transmitter of narrations Sulayman al-ʿUlwan, may God free him from his bonds, said, "No text was revealed prohibiting it. Our law only supports what was revealed."[70]

I say: Among what supports that [argument] in our law:

Abu Hurayra, may God be pleased with him, on the authority of the Messenger of God, may God's blessings and peace be upon him, said, "Among those who live the best life is a man who clings to the reins of his horse in the cause of God, who hastens to his saddle when he hears a voice screaming in horror and flies toward it, expectantly seeking to kill or die."[71]

The shaykh, the transmitter of narrations Sulayman al-ʿUlwan, may God free him from his bonds, said, "Whoever carries himself into the land of the enemy, casts himself into the armies of invading disbelievers, or ties explosives to himself—with the intention of torturing the enemy, sowing fear in their hearts, wiping out disbelief, destroying their people, and driving them from the lands and holiest places of Muslims—then that person will attain the reward of the martyrs, the forbearing, and the righteous mujahidin."[72]

And the hadith of Abu Saʿid al-Khudri, may God be pleased with him, who said that the Messenger of God, may God's blessings and peace be upon him, said, "Those who meet in the first ranks do not turn their faces until they are killed. The first among you are those who will fall into the highest rooms of Paradise. Your Lord will laugh at them. When your Lord laughs at a people, there will be no reckoning for them."[73]

The one who undertakes a martyrdom operation is more entitled than the one to whom this description applies. And God is all-knowing.

In a sound hadith: "Whoever is killed while defending his property is a martyr. Whoever is killed while defending his own life is a martyr. Whoever is killed while defending his religion is a martyr. Whoever dies in defense of his family is a martyr."[74]

Our shaykh, the transmitter of hadith, Sulaymān al-ʿUlwān, may God free him from his bonds, said, "The one killed in these operations is killed in defense of his religion [*dīn*], and out of protecting his soul and his family."[75]

ʿAmr ibn ʿAbasa al-Sulami, may God be pleased with him, said, "A man came to the Messenger of God, may God's blessings and peace be upon him, and asked, 'Which jihad is best?' The Messenger of God, may God's blessings and peace be upon him, said, 'The one whose horse is wounded and whose blood flows.' "[76]

Know—my sister, the questioner—that the issue of martyrdom operations is an ongoing matter. It is a matter analogous to the question of self-immersion [*inghimās*] in the enemy.

Take as an example the *Musannaf* of Ibn Abi Shayba, on the authority of ʿAsim bin Muhammad Qatada, who said that Muʿadh bin ʿAfraʾ said, "Oh, Messenger of God! What does a servant do that causes the Lord to laugh?" He responded, "To immerse his bare hand into the enemy." He said, "He cast off the armor that he was wearing, and he went forth and fought until he was killed." Ibn Hazm declared this sound in *al-Muhalla*, al-Tabari recalled it in his *History* [*Tarikh*] on the authority of ʿAwf bin al-Harith (the son of ʿAfraʾ), and it is also in the *Sira* of Ibn Hisham.[77]

In the narration that Muslim reported in his *Sahih*, the Messenger of God, may God's blessings and peace be upon him, said, "Rise forth to paradise, whose breadth spans the heavens and the earth." ʿUmayr bin al-Humam al-Ansari said, "Oh, Messenger of God! Paradise spans the heavens and the earth?" He said, "Yes." [ʿUmayr] said, "Excellent!" The Messenger of God, may God's blessings and peace be upon him, said, "What did

you imagine that caused you to say, 'Excellent'?" [ʿUmayr] said, "Nothing, by God, oh Messenger of God, except the desire that I be counted among its inhabitants." He replied, "You are among its people." ʿUmayr took dates from his quiver and began to eat them but soon said, "Were I to survive to eat these dates, it would mean a long life!" He threw aside his dates and then fought the enemy until he was killed.[78]

Al-Nawawi, may God have mercy on him, said, "Within this is the permissibility of immersion [*inghimās*] within the disbelievers, of embarking toward martyrdom. It is permitted without any condemnation from the majority of the scholars [*ʿulamāʾ*]."[79]

And the story of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, may God be pleased with him, in Constantinople is both well known and celebrated. It tells of a man from among the Muslims who carried himself against a column of Romans until he entered among them. The people cried out, "May God be praised! Has he carried himself to his own destruction?" Abu Ayyub stood and said, "Oh people, you might interpret the verse through this manner of recitation [*taʾwīl*]. It was revealed to us, the helpers [*anṣār*], when God fortified Islam and increased its supporters. In secret, some of us said to one another, 'Our wealth has been spent. Yet God has fortified Islam and increased its supporters. Were we to tend to our wealth, then we will restore what was spent.' God revealed to His Prophet, may God's blessings and peace be upon him, His response to what we had said: 'And spend in the way of God and do not, with your own hands, cast yourselves into ruin. And be virtuous. Truly God loves the virtuous.' "[80] Ibn Habban narrated it. Al-Albani considered it sound.[81] And he said, "In the hadith what is demonstrated is the permissibility of what are known today as 'martyrdom operations' which some Muslim youth undertake against the enemies of God."[82]

Likewise, this is what the biographers [*ahl al-siyar*] and Ibn al-Mubarak in his *Kitab al-Jihad* narrated on the story of al-Baraʾ bin Malik, who carried himself into the apostates [*murtadīn*] of the Bani Hanifa.[83]

In some sources, he commanded his companions to carry him upon a shield balanced atop the tips of their spears. They brought him to the garden, where he attacked [the Byzantines], assaulted them, and fought them until he opened the gate of the garden. He was wounded almost eighty times that day. Khalid bin al-Walid appointed a man to heal his wounds. This is found in the *Thaqat* of Ibn Habban and the *History* of al-Tabari.[84]

And likewise, the story of Abu Hadrad al-Aslami and his companions who carried themselves against a greater army, while they were no more than four in number. God granted them victory against the polytheists [*mushrikūn*]. Ibn Hishām in his *Sira* and Ibn al-Nahhas in *al-Masharīʿ* recall this.[85]

And, the action of ʿAbd Allah bin Hanzila al-Ghusayl, when he fought unarmored during one of the battles. He even flung his shield aside. Then, he fought until they killed him. Ibn al-Nahhas recalled this in his al-*Masharīʿ*.[86]

Al-Bayhaqi transmitted in the *Sunan* the story of the man who heard Abu Musa al-Ashʿari, may God be pleased with him, recall a raised hadith: "Paradise is under the shade of swords." The man rose, broke the scabbard of his sword, charged the enemy, and then fought until he was killed.[87]

And the story of Anas bin al-Nadr during the fall at Uhud, when it says: "He smelled the fragrance of Paradise, then he immersed himself into the polytheists [*mushrikīn*] until he was killed."[88]

And in the collections of Muslim [al-Hajjaj] and al-Bukhari, the story of Salma bin al-Akwaʾ, al-Akhram al-Asadi, and Abu Qatada, who carried themselves against ʿUyayna bin Ḥasan and those with him. The Messenger of God, may God's blessings and peace be

upon him, made an exception for them when he said, "Our best horseman today was Abu Qatada and our best foot soldier was Salma."[89]

Ibn al-Nahhas, may God have mercy on him, said, "In a sound, settled narration, there is textual evidence indicating that is permissible for a man to carry himself against a greater number of the enemy even though he is certain that he will be killed provided that he is wholeheartedly desirous of martyrdom. This is similar to what Salma and al-Akhram al-Asadi did. The Prophet, may God's blessing and peace be upon him, did not charge them, nor did the companions condemn them for what they did. The hadith provides textual evidence for the desirability and merit of this act. The Prophet, may God's blessing and peace be upon him, praised Abu Qatada and Salma for their acts as they went forth, carrying themselves alone against the enemy, and the Muslims did not hesitate to follow them."[90]

Likewise, what was narrated by Ibn Abi Shayba on the authority of Mudrik bin ʿAwf al-Ahmasi, who said, "I was along with ʿUmar, may God be pleased with him . . . and someone said, 'Oh, Commander of the Faithful,' a man has sold himself.' Mudrik bin ʿAwf said, 'By God. That was my maternal uncle, Commander of the Faithful. The people declared that he had cast himself to his own destruction.' ʿUmar said, 'They lied. He is among those who purchased the afterlife by selling the world.' "[91]

Imam Ibn al-Nahhas, in his *al-Mashariʾ al-Ashwaq* on the authority of al-Muhallab, said, "Consensus formed on the permissibility of plunging into dangers during jihad. On the authority of al-Ghazali, in his *Ihya*, he transmitted, 'There is no dispute on the single Muslim who attacks the ranks of the disbelievers and fights, though he knows that he will be killed.' "[92]

My dear sister, the questioner, place your trust in me. Reconsider what Imam al-Ghazali said: "Though he knows that he will be killed." That applies to the martyrdom seeker [*istishhādī*].

Imam al-Nawawi transmitted in his *Sharh Muslim* the agreement upon exposing oneself to harm in jihad.[93]

Ahmad narrated in his *Musnad* on the authority of Abu Ishaq, saying, "I said to al-Baraʾ bin ʿAzab, may God be pleased with him, 'A man carried himself against the polytheists. Is he among those who cast themselves to their destruction?' He said, 'No, because God, Almighty and Powerful, dispatched to His messenger, upon him be blessings and peace, to say, "So fight in the way of God. Thou art accountable only for thyself." ' "[94] That is only for the expenditure.[95]

Al-Tabari narrated in his *History* on the Battle of Muʾta, saying, "Then, Jaʿfar bin Abi Talib took one of the flags and fought with it until the fighting overcame him. He attacked upon his blond-haired horse, who was wounded. Then he fought against the people until he was killed. Jaʿfar was the first man among the Muslims whose horse was brought to serve Islam."[96]

Ibn al-Mubarak narrated in his *Kitab al-Jihad* and al-Bayhaqi in his *Sunan* on the authority of Thabit that ʿIkrima bin Abu Jahl, may God be pleased with him, departed one day, and Khalid said to him, "Do not do that. For you to be killed would be grave for the Muslims." He said, "Get away from me, Khalid. I was with the Messenger of God, may God's blessings and peace be upon him, before you. My father and I were among the strongest partisans of the Messenger of God." So he went forth and was killed.[97]

Ibn ʿAsakir reported in his *Tarikh Dimashq* in an narrative chain [*isnād*] on the authority of ʿAqaba bin Qays al-Kilabi that a man said to Abu ʿUbayda bin al-Jarrah, may God be pleased with him, on the day of Yarmuk, once he had made the decision to attack them, "Do you appoint me as executor of the will of your Prophet, may God's blessings

and peace be upon him, in everything?" He said, "Recite the peace [*salām*]. And tell him that we found what our Lord has promised us to be true."[98]

The aspect of martyrdom-seeking that is present in these narrations that we have presented is similar to what shaykh Hamud bin ʿUqlaʾ al-Shuʿaybi, may God have mercy on him, said: "The aspect of martyrdom-seeking as related to the question of carrying oneself against a greater enemy and, likewise, immersion [*inghimās*] in the ranks of the enemy, and intentionally exposing oneself to harm while on jihad is that it is applicable to the question of the mujahid who exposes himself, immerses himself into a gathering of the disbelievers, and then kills them, causing casualties and vexation."[99]

There are numerous narrations that are related to martyrdom operations. Let's mention a few here.

Imam Ibn Kathir transmitted in his *al-Bidaya wa-l-nihaya:* "Ibn Ishaq said, 'Abu Dujana went out unshielded without the Messenger of God, may God's blessings and peace be upon him. An arrow pierced him in the back, causing him an ordeal until the arrows struck him again and again.' "[100]

Al-Tabari narrated in his *History*: "'ʿAbd Allah bin al-Zubayr, may God be pleased with both of them [*sic*], fought on the Day of the Camel with al-Ashtar al-Nakhaʿi, exchanging blows. When ʿAbd Allah saw that al-Ashtar would get the best of him, he said the famous words: 'Kill me and Malik!' Al-Shaʿbi said, 'The people did not know him as Malik. Had Ibn al-Zubayr said, "Kill me and al-Ashtar," even if al-Ashtar had one million lives, not one of them would have been spared. He continued fighting, struggling to elude Ibn al-Zubayr's grip, until he managed to escape.' "[101]

Shaykh Yusuf bin Salih al-ʿUyayri, may God have mercy on him, said, "Within the demand of Ibn al-Zubayr that his companions kill him along with al-Ashtar, there is evidence of the permissibility of killing oneself for the benefit of the religion if the situation demands."[102]

Al-Tabari narrated in his *Tafsir*, "The horses of the Muslims fled in fear of the female elephants of the Persians when the Muslims met them during the Battle of the Bridge. One of the Muslim men remained, and he fashioned an elephant from clay. He trained his horse with it until the horse became accustomed to it. When his horse became unafraid of the elephant, he rode forth alone to one of the advancing enemy elephants. It was said to him, 'It will kill you!' He said, 'There is no harm in fighting and bringing victory to the Muslims!' "[103]

I say, even then, this action could be called a "martyrdom operation," though the term did not exist in the language of the time.

Ibn Kathir narrated in his *al-Bidaya wa-l-nihaya*: "'Ikrima bin Abi Jahl said on the Day of Yarmuk, 'I fought the messenger of God, may God's blessings and peace be upon him, on the field of battle. Do I flee from you today?' Then he shouted, 'Who swears an oath to the death?' His uncle, al-Ḥārith bin Hishām, and Dirar bin al-Azwar, amid four hundred Muslims and their horses, swore oaths. They fought in front of Khalid's tent until they were all wounded, some of them killed, and the upright among them was Dirar bin al-Azwar, may God be pleased with them.

"Al-Qaqidi, among others, recalled that when they were wounded, they asked for water, which was brought to them. As it was brought near, one of the men turned to the others and said, 'Push it away.' When one pushed it aside, another saw and said, 'Push it away.' They pushed it away, one by one, until they all died together, having never taken a single drink, may God be pleased with them altogether."[104]

My dear sister, the questioner, trust me. How could every man among them deny himself the water though he knew death was certain if he did not drink? The motive is self-sacrifice, altruism, and likewise to seek martyrdom. He was killed in order to ensure the possibility of other Muslims to live.

Al-Imam Ibn Kathir, may God have mercy on him, said on the events of 1191, "The English king came upon a sizable ship belonging to the Muslims that had approached Beirut loaded with goods and weapons. As he sought to take it, the six hundred heroic fighters on it, to the last man, cast themselves to their destruction. When they realized they would either drown or die, they breached the sides of the hull, and they drowned. The *Franj* were not able to take anything from the vessel—neither supplies nor weapons."[105]

Even in the religion of the Jews and the Christians, we find that these operations are approved. One such ruling came in an ancient time: the story of the imprisonment of Samson [Shamshūn]. They used Samson to mill flour for them while in prison. Once, on a day when they gathered together in a colonnaded building, they released him so that he could play for them. Assembled, the people numbered thirty thousand men and women. Samson demanded that the boy who held his hands and bonds place him in the midst of the columns that held up the building. He leaned hard, placing his right hand and his hips upon the two main pillars. He said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" The building collapsed, destroyed. Samson and all the people who were in the building died. The deaths of the enemies he caused with his death outnumbered the deaths of the enemies he caused in his life.[106]

Muslim scholars from prior eras discussed the ruling on self-immersion [*inghimās*] into the enemy with an older perspective, much as contemporary Muslim scholars discuss the ruling on self-immersion into the enemy with a modern perspective—martyrdom operations—and, among these [are the following].

Imam al-Shafiʿi, may God bless him, said, "There is no restriction on the man who carries himself against a majority in order to attack or the man who embarks knowing, with certainty, that he will be killed, because a man from among the Ansar imperiled himself, during the time of the Messenger of God, may God's blessings and peace be upon him, and carried himself against a greater number of polytheists during the Battle of Badr after the Prophet, may God's blessings and peace be upon him, announced that doing so was good. He was killed."[107]

Imam al-Sarkhasi said, may God have mercy on him, "Were one man to carry himself against a sizable group of the polytheists, knowing that he would either wound or cause them grievous vexation, then there is no dispute on that."[108]

Imam al-Qurtubi transmitted in his *Tafsīr* some sayings from the Maliki jurists: "Were one to carry himself against a hundred, or a military encampment—or something similar—knowing, or being certain, that he would be killed but that he would cause them grievous vexation or influence and benefit the Muslims, then this is permitted." Then he said, "Correct. According to me, the permissibility of attacking armies for those who do not have the capability to fight them equally has four aspects: (1) a desire for martyrdom, (2) the existence of vexation, (3) the willingness of Muslims to go against them, (4) the strength of their souls to see that this single act is what you might consider a multiplier."[109]

The shaykh of Islam, Ibn Taymiyya, may God have mercy on him, said, "He believed that he would be killed," in response to some of the contemporaries who considered the analogy of contemporary *inghimās* to historical immersion [*inghimās*] to be false, citing the proof that the first is certain to be killed, which is the opposite of the second.[110]

Shaykh Imam Hamud bin ʿUqlaʾ al-Shuʿaybi, may God have mercy on him, said, "It is permitted for the mujahid to expose himself to harm in a martyrdom-seeking operation and to destroy himself for the sake of jihad and traumatizing the enemy. Were he killed by weapons in the hands of disbelievers, as the above evidence indicated in answering the question of exposing oneself to harm and through self-immersion [*inghimās*], or by weapons held in Muslim hands, as was shown in the question of the shield, or by his own self-provided evidence, as in the story of the youth, these are all equivalent within the field of jihad. As was shown in the Sunna, the circumstances of jihad, given the tremendous benefits, forgive many acts, such as lying and deception, that are otherwise not forgiven. One is permitted to kill those whom one is otherwise not permitted to kill. This is the fundamental issue [*aṣl*] within questions of jihad, and by this, martyrdom operations become an extension of this issue."[111]

Our shaykh ʿAbd al-Rahman bin Jibrin said, "There is no doubt that it is permitted if there is a benefit to it, humiliation to the disbelievers, and safety from torment, as some of the companions demonstrated who cast down their dates and then fought until they were killed. They devoted themselves. So, too, did those who saw the ranks of the polytheists and plunged into them though they knew that they would be killed."[112]

The traditionist Shaykh Sulayman bin Nasir al-ʿUlwan said, "I researched this matter elsewhere and provided dozens of pieces of textual evidence for the permissibility and legitimacy of these operations. There is nothing wrong with going forth on these to defeat the Jews and Christians."[113]

Shaykh ʿAli bin Khudayr al-Khudayr, may God break his bonds, said, "Martyrdom operations are part of jihad. Today they are among the most favored forms of jihad in the path of God."[114]

So, too, did shaykh Yssuf bin Salih al-ʿUyayri, may God have mercy on him, in his valuable book that simplifies the matter, titled, "Did Khava Commit Suicide or Martyrdom?" I advise you, my sister, the questioner, and those of your group of sisters, to read this book and benefit from it.[115]

Finally, to you, my dear sister, the question that queried the reprehensibility of these operations by our sisters, say to them: "I agree with you that suicide is forbidden within the law. The evidence on this matter has proliferated. However, are you able to show to me whether this suicide is as the scholars knew it?" It is known that the technical definition takes precedence over common meaning. Otherwise, it is considered a lack of definition.

Among the definitions for suicide that some of the scholars knew, they said: "It is one who carries himself for any worldly purpose that harms him or contributes to his destruction."

So, my sister, the questioner, ask them: "Is one who is seeking martyrdom killing himself for a worldly purpose? Or another reason?"

Imam al-Qurtubi, may God have mercy on him, said, in his definition for suicide: "It is a man who kills himself intentionally due to desire for the world, a demand for money, to carry himself into damaging harm, who does so out of anxiety or anger."

Is the martyrdom seeker [*istishhādī*] killing himself out of desire for the world? Or a demand for money? Or desiring the afterlife, the reward of the glories of paradise?

It is said of the definition of suicide, "He killed himself out of anger, or anxiety, or frustration."

Is the *istishhādī* killing himself out of anger, or anxiety, or frustration?

It is known that not all who kill themselves are suicides. So mention to all who continue to set upon what the narrations and other evidence discuss on the issue—on the

prohibition of suicide, the promise that those who commit suicide will be tortured in the fire. Say to them, "The throne is eternal!" Debate them! Martyrdom operations are always separate from the types of suicide that are confirmed by these passages. Let them come and see. And remain steadfast in God.

The answer of a member of the Sharīʿa Council

Shaykh Abu Humam Bakr bin ʿAbd al-ʿAziz al-Athari

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Abu Qatada al-Filastini (b. 1959 or 1960)
Abu Humam al-Athari* (or Turki al-Binʿali, 1984–2017)
Abu al-Mundhir al-Shinqiti (?)

Al-Qaʿida and Affiliates

Usama bin Ladin (1957–2011)
Ayman al-Zawahiri (b. 1951)
Yusuf al-ʿUyayri (1967–2003)
Abu Ayman al-Hilali (?)
Abu Saʿd al-Amili (?)
ʿAbd al-Hakim Hasan (b. 1959)
Abu Yahya al-Libi (1963–2012)
Anwar al-ʿAwlaki (1971–2011)

The Shuʿaybi School

Hamud bin ʿUqlaʾ al-Shuʿaybi (1925 or 1927–2001)
ʿAli bin Khudayr al-Khudayr (b. 1954)
Sulayman al-ʿUlwan (b. 1969)
Nasir al-Fahd (b. 1969)
Nonaligned Abu Basir al-Tartusi (?)
Hamid bin ʿAbd Allah al-ʿAli (b. 1960)
Bishr bin Fahd al-Bishr (?)

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Yahya Hashim Hasan Farghal (?)

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Notes

Introduction

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Chapter 1

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89. See "Alsunnah.info," Web.Archive.org, December 13, 2002, https://web.archive.org/web/20020501000000*/alsunnah.info (accessed March 18, 2018); "Abu-qatada.com," Web.Archive.org, March 29, 2004, https://web.archive.org/web/20040329134541/http://abu-qatada.com:80 (accessed March 18, 2018); "www.mtj.tw:80," Web.Archive.org, December 13, 2007, https://web.archive.org/web/20071213234225/http://www.mtj.tw:80 (accessed March 18, 2018).
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92. See "Tawhed.ws," Web.Archive.org, May 22, 2015, https://web.archive.org/web/20170801000000*/tawhed.ws (accessed March 19, 2018).
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95. Brian Fishman, *The Master Plan: ISIS, Al Qaeda, and the Jihadi Strategy for Final Victory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 71–72.
96. For an interview with al-Filastini regarding his situation with the United Kingdom, see Abū Qatāda al-Filasṭīnī with Kaja Blattmann, trans., "Conversation with the Shaykh Abū Qatāda inside the British Prisons," *Welt des Islams* 53, no. 3–4 (2013): 479–482. On his theses for jihad, see Abū Qatāda al-Filasṭīnī, "Limaadhal-Jihaad (Why Jihaad)," *Welt des Islams* 53, no. 3–4 (2013): 483–491. Peter Nesser, "Abū Qatāda and Palestine," *Welt des Islams* 53, no. 3–4 (2013): 416–448, provides further biographical details and context. For the McCants and Brachman study, see William McCants and Jarret Brachman, eds., *Militant Ideology Atlas: Research Compendium* (West Point: Combatting Terrorism Center, 2006).

97. Al-ʿUyayri rose to prominence within Jihadi-Salafi transnational networks. At the age of eighteen, he traveled to Afghanistan to join in the jihad against the Soviets. By 1989, he was appointed as the bodyguard of Bin Ladin. In 1994, after having fought Americans in Somalia, he traveled to Saudi Arabia, where he studied with Salman al-ʿAwda—a former student of Hamud bin ʿUqla al-Shuʿaybi—and began fundraising and agitating for the jihad in Bosnia and Chechnya. According to his biographer on the Minbar, he almost linked al-Shuʿaybi to the Taliban in Afghanistan. He was killed by the Saudi police in May 2003. These biographical details were drawn from Reuven Paz, "Shaykh Yusuf al-ʿUyayri: A Model of Jihadi-Salafi Scholar, Webmaster and Commander," in *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 441. See also Hegghammer, *Jihad in Saudi Arabia*, 165–180, for al-ʿUyayri's role in the creation of AQAP; and see Roel Meijer, "Yusuf al-ʿUyayri and the Making of a Revolutionary Salafi Praxis," *Welt des Islams* 47, no. 3–4 (2007): 422–459, for al-ʿUyayri's application of the Jihadi-Salafi creed and methodology to specific contexts.
98. Hilali is a strategist affiliated with al-Qaʿida who was both an interpreter for Bin Ladin and one of the heads of the now-defunct al-Shumukh Internet forum. Little of his biography is known; see Reuven Paz, "Qaedat al-Jihad: New Name on the Road to Palestine," *Policy Watch* 623 (May 2002), http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/qaedat-al-jihad-new-name-on-the-road-to-palestine (accessed July 1, 2012).
99. Cf. Jarret Brachman, *The War Within: A Look inside al-Qaeda's Undoing* (MacDill AFB, FL: Joint Special Operations University Press, 2016), 47, where Brachman notes that in 2013, al-ʿAmili participated in a joint al-Qaʿida statement regarding global Jihadi-Salafi discord.
100. Cf. Saud al-Sarhan, "The Struggle for Authority: The Shaykhs of Jihadi-Salafism in Saudi Arabia, 1997–2003," in *Saudi Arabia in Transition: Insights on Social, Political, Economic, and Religious Change*, ed. Bernard Haykel, Thomas Hegghammer, and Stéphane Lacroix (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 181–206.
101. Abū Muḥammad al-Maqdisī, "Risāla ilā al-shaykh al-Shuʿaybī," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, June 2001, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_8009.html (accessed March 19, 2019).
102. Cf. Hegghammer, *Jihad in Saudi Arabia*, 86–87.
103. Cf. Hegghammer, *Jihad in Saudi Arabia*, 88–89.
104. For more, see Hegghammer, *Jihad in Saudi Arabia*, 89–91; and see Murad Batal al-Shishani, "From 9/11 to Iraq: The Long Arm of Saudi Arabia's Suliman al-Ulwan" *Jamestown Foundation* 2, no. 2 (February 2011) https://www.refworld.org/docid/4d6e1c982.html (accessed March 19, 2019); Abū Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Ṣāliḥ, "Ṣafḥāt min Ḥayāt Faḍīlat al-Shaykh Sulaymān bin Nāṣir al-ʿUlwān," Saaid.net, http://www.saaid.net/Warathah/1/Al-Alwan.htm (accessed March 19, 2019).
105. Mohammed M. Hafez, "The Alchemy of Martyrdom: Jihadi-Salafism and Debates over Suicide Bombings in the Muslim World," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 38 (2010): 364–378.

106. See Aaron Y. Zelin, "Purifying Islam and Combating the West: Post Mortem Analysis of the Indelible Impact of al-Qaeda's Abu Yahya al-Libi," *Jamestown Foundation Militant Leadership Monitor* 3, no. 6 (July 2012), http://mlm.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=39568&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=539&cHash=dec699814cbea263b8ee4c985ae4dc1f (accessed July 15, 2012); Declan Walsh and Eric Schmitt, "Drone Strike Killed No. 2 in Al Qaeda, U.S. Officials Say," NYTimes.com, June 5, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/06/world/asia/qaeda-deputy-killed-in-drone-strike-in-pakistan.html?_r=3&hp& (accessed June 6, 2012).
107. See Ayman al-Zawāhirī, *Al-Tabriʾa*, Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, 2008, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_19754 (accessed March 19, 2019), 53. There was some speculation that he was once in Afghanistan; see Abdul Hameed Bakier and Erich Marquardt, "An Ideological and Operational Threat: Abu ʿAmr Shaykh ʿIsa," *CTC Sentinel* 1, no. 8 (July 2008): 21–22.
108. Chris Heffelinger, "Kuwaiti Cleric Hamid al-Ali: The Bridge between Ideology and Action," Jamestown Foundation, April 26, 2007, https://jamestown.org/program/kuwaiti-cleric-hamid-al-ali-the-bridge-between-ideology-and-action (accessed March 19, 2019).
109. Very little biographical information is known about those in this final group. A Bishr bin Fahd al-Bishr has been named as a member of the Sahwa movement in Saudi Arabia, but it is unclear if this is the same individual. William McCants and Jarret Brachman, eds., *Militant Ideology Atlas: Research Compendium* (West Point: Combatting Terrorism Center, 2006), 285, has produced the sole biography on Ghunaymi. Today Ghunaymi, who is of Egyptian descent, resides in Bonn, Germany, where he is under political asylum. He was a member of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad at the same time as al-Zawahiri. According to his website on the Minbar, Al-Amin al-Hajj Muhammad Ahmad was born in 1947 in what is today Sudan (North Sudan), graduated from the College of Literature in Khartoum, and has taught throughout the Muslim world. If this is this the same person mentioned on the Minbar, his links with the Jihadi-Salafi movement remain fully unproven. See "Nabdha ʿan al-Shaykh al-Amīn al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Aḥmad," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, n.d. https://web.archive.org/web/20100219024542/http://www.tawhed.ws/a?a=pgphzqs5 (accessed March 19, 2019).
110. For his dispatch and campaign, see Fishman, *The Master Plan*, 4–84.
111. Joas Wagemakers, "Reclaiming Scholarly Authority: Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi's Critique of *Jihadi* Practices," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 34, no. 7 (2011): 530–531.
112. Joas Wagemakers, "Protecting Jihad: The Sharia Council of the Minbar al-Tawhid wa-l-Jihad," *Middle East Policy* 18, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 141–152.
113. Johnsen, *The Last Refuge*, 272.
114. Abū al-Mundhir al-Shinqīṭī, "Naḥnu Anṣār al-Sharīʿa," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, n.d. http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_12031 (accessed March 19, 2019).

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122. Hallaq, *Authority*, 240.

Chapter 2

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August 14, 2009, http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=1&issueno=11218&article=531969 (accessed August 16, 2009). For further on the ideological and theological positions taken by the JAA, see Kifah Zibun, "B1. Gaza Salafist Leader Abu Hamza al-Maqdisi, Interview on Salafi Jihadi Groups in Gaza, Ramallah, August 20, 2009 (Excerpts)," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 39, no. 4 (Summer 2010): 161–164.

3. For the "Tuḥfat," see Al-Lajnat al-Sharʿiyya fī Jamāʿat al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, "Tuḥfat al-muwaḥḥidīn fī aham masāʾil uṣūl al-dīn," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, Jumādā al-Ākhira 3, 1430, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_1066 (accessed March 19, 2019).
4. Cf. Qurʾan 2:256 and 4:51.
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6. Al-Lajnat, "Tuḥfat," 62.
7. Al-Lajnat, "Tuḥfat," 62.
8. Al-Lajnat, "Tuḥfat," 61, 64.
9. Al-Lajnat, "Tuḥfat," 63.
10. Al-Lajnat, "Tuḥfat," 64.
11. Al-Lajnat, "Tuḥfat," 67.
12. Al-Lajnat, "Tuḥfat," 67.
13. Abū Muḥammad al-Maqdisī, "Muqaddima," in Al-Lajnat, "Tuḥfat," 3.
14. Abū al-Walīd al-Maqdisī, *Ajwabat al-laqāʾ al-maftūḥ maʿ al-shaykh al-mujāhid Abū al-Walīd, amīr jamāʿat al-tawḥīd wa-l-jihād*, Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, December 2010 http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_11877 (accessed March 19, 2019), 155. For a summary, see Joas Wagemakers, "Defending Failure in Gaza (Part 1)," Jihadica.com, August 18, 2011, http://www.jihadica.com/defending-failure-in-gaza-part-1, and "Defending Failure in Gaza (Part 2)," Jihadica.com, September 9, 2011, http://www.jihadica.com/defending-failure-in-gaza-part-2 (accessed March 19, 2019).
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16. Abū al-Walīd al-Maqdisī, *Ajwabat*, 152.
17. Cf. Wagemakers, "Protecting Jihad," 141–152.
18. Johnsen, *The Last Refuge*, 272.
19. Al-Shinqīṭī, "Naḥnu anṣār al-Sharīʿa."
20. Al-Shinqīṭī, "Naḥnu anṣār al-Sharīʿa.
21. Al-Shinqīṭī, "Naḥnu anṣār al-Sharīʿa," 1.
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23. Al-Shinqīṭī, "Naḥnu anṣār al-Sharīʿa, 4. Cf. Qurʾan, 21.92.
24. Among the more famous of those ongoing debates are those of Bruce Hoffman and Marc Sageman. Hoffman, in *Inside Terrorism*, 6th ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), and in several articles has continually argued for a structured and resilient central authority and command structure to al-Qāʿīda. Sageman, a former CIA and US foreign service officer, in *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) and *Leaderless Jihad* argues for the acephalous and networked nature of al-Qaʿida. Hoffman wrote a substantial yet critical review of Sageman's position in "The Myth of Grass-Roots Terrorism: Why Osama bin Laden Still Matters," *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 3 (May–June 2008): 133–138.

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27. Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 290–291.
28. Margaret Somers, "The Narrative Construction of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach," *Theory and Society* 23 (1994): 605–649; emphasis in original.
29. Cf. Berger, *Sacred Canopy*, 66–67.
30. Berger, *Sacred Canopy*, 53.
31. Flood, *The Ascetic Self*, 9.
32. Valantasis, *The Making of the Self*, 101; emphasis added.
33. Weber, *From Max Weber*, 325.
34. Weber, *From Max Weber*, 325.
35. Weber, *From Max Weber*, 325.
36. Weber, *From Max Weber*, 325.
37. Cf. Ahmet Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).
38. Max Weber, *Sociology of Religion*(Boston: Beacon, 1993 [1921]), 262–263.
39. Cf. Christopher Melchert, "Asceticism," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd ed., ed. Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson, Brill Online, 2013, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/asceticism-COM_0022.
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41. For the Muʿtazili position, see Goldizher, *Introduction*, 87.
42. R. A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 228–230.
43. For more on *zuhd* in Islamic thought, see Goldziher, *Introduction*, 87–130. Leah Kinberg, "What Is Meant by *Zuhd*," *Studia Islamica* 61 (1985): 27–44, contends that *zuhd* does not necessarily mean extraordinary physical asceticism but may instead be an act of renunciation present in daily Muslim life. Feisal Abdul Rauf, "Asceticism in Islam," *Cross Currents* 57, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 591–602, translates the word *zuhd* as "asceticism" but keeps it closely connected to Sufi practice, as do Michael Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism* (New York: Paulist, 1995), 202–203; and Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 1–7. For the lexical meanings, consult Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 4th ed., ed. J. Milton Cowan (Urbana, IL.: Spoken Language Services, 1994); and Edward W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Islamic Texts

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57. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ al-fatāwā*, 35 vols., ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān bin Muḥammad bin Qāsim (Medina: Majmuʿ al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibāʿa al-Maṣḥaf al-Sharīf, 1416 [1995]), 28.441–442; cf. Jamāʿat al-Jihād bi-Maṣr, "Li-mādhā shuriʿ al-jihād," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihad, n.d., http://tawhed.ws/r?i=3hcdz3ep.
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60. Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief*, 149.
61. Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality*, vol. 2, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), 77.
62. Abū Mūhammad al-Maqdisī, "Hādhihi ʿaqīdatunā," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, 1997, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_35422.html (accessed March 19, 2019). As of 2015, the Minbar recorded its having been read 285,705 times and downloaded 64,072 times. The reading count of the next-closest document on matters of creed is Abū-l-Ḥasan a-Ashʿarī's (260–324/874–936) "Al-Ibāna ʿan uṣūl al-dīyāna,"

with a total of 73,496 readers. The download count of the next-closest downloaded document is ʿAlī bin Khuḍayr al-Khuḍayr's "Al-Zināد fī sharḥ lumʿa al-iʿtiqād," with 45,525 downloads.

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67. Al-Maqdisī, "Hādhihi ʿaqīdatunā," 36.
68. Abū Muḥammad al-Maqdisī, *Millat Ibrāhīm wa-Daʿwat al-Anbiyāʾ wa-l-Mursalīn*, Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_20383.html.
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71. Al-Maqdisī, "Hādhihi ʿaqīdatunā," 2.
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76. Binyamin Abrahamov, "Ibn Taymiyya on the Agreement of Reason with Tradition," *Muslim World* 82, no. 3–4 (July–October 1992): 263.
77. M. Sait Özervarli, "The Qurʾānic Rational Theology of Ibn Taymiyya and His Criticism of the *Mutakallimūn*," in *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, ed. Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 80–83.
78. Sayed Khatab, *The Power of Sovereignty: The Political and Ideological Philosophy of Sayyid Qutb* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 23.
79. ʿAlī Khuḍayr al-Khuḍayr, "Al-Wasīṭ fī sharḥ awwal risāla fī majmūʿat al-tawḥīd,"Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, n.d., http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_15483, 4.
80. Al-Maqdisī, "Hādhihi ʿaqīdatunā," 4.
81. Ḥāmid bin ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿAlī, "Al-Manhaj al-Ṣaḥīḥ fī Fahm Ṣifāt Allāh," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, n.d., http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_5443.html, 1–6.
82. Al-Maqdisī, "Hādhihi ʿaqīdatunā," 5.
83. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ al-fatāwā*, vol. 7, 204.
84. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ al-fatāwā*, vol. 7, 131.

85. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ al-fatāwā*, vol. 7, 558.
86. For an alternative view of Bin Safwan and his followers, see Abū al-Ḥasan Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn wa-ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn*, vol. 1, ed. Muḥammad Muḥī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʿaṣriyya, 1411), 213–216. Cf. Josef van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991), vol. 2, 429, and vol. 5, 212–213. See also Izutsu, *The Concept of Belief*, 84; Cornelia Schöck, "Belief and Unbelief in Classical Sunnī Theology," in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 3rd ed., ed. Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson, Brill Online, 2013, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/belief-and-unbelief-in-classical-sunni-theology-COM_23871. For more on Ibn Taymiyya and the Jahmiyya, see Daniel Lav, *Radical Islam and the Revival of Medieval Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 34–37.
87. Lav, *Radical Islam*, 38.
88. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ al-fatāwā*, vol. 7, 516.
89. Lav, *Radical Islam*, 19.
90. Lahoud, *The Jihadis' Path*, 27–56.
91. Lahoud, *The Jihadis' Path*, 95.
92. Joas Wagemakers, "'Seceders and Postponers'? An Analysis of the 'Khawarij' and 'Murjiʾa' Labels in Polemical Debates between Quietist and Jihadi-Salafis," in *Contextualizing Jihadi Thought*, ed. Jeevan Deol and Zaheer Kazmi (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 163.
93. Abū Muḥammad al-Maqdisī, "Imtāʿ al-Naẓr fī Kashf Shubhāt Murjiʾa al-ʿAṣr," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, n.d., http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_362, 4.
94. Al-Maqdisī, "Imtāʿ," 5.
95. Al-Maqdisī, "Imtāʿ," 5.
96. On the pre-Islamic connections, see Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, ed. S. M. Stern, trans. C. R. Barber and S. M. Stern (New York: Transaction, 2009 [1966]), 65–69. On the proto- Shiʿi use of the term, see Etan Kohlberg, "*Baraʾa* in Shiʿi Doctrine," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 39, no. 1 (1976): 91–98. On the reception of *al-walā wa-l-barāʾ* in Khariji thought, see Patricia Crone and Fritz Zimmerman, eds., *The Epistle of Salim Ibn Dhakwan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 33. For the connection between Khariji thought and Jihadi-Salafi thought on the subject, see Lahoud, *The Jihadists' Path*, 96–99.
97. Emiliana Francesca, "The Formation and Early Development of the Ibāḍī *Maddhab*," *Jersusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 28 (2008): 272; cf. Kohlberg, "*Baraʿa*," 142–144.
98. Francesca, "The Formation," 272. See also Emiliana Francesca, "Early Ibāḍī Jurisprudence," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 30 (2005): 262–263.
99. Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍāʾ al-ṣirāt al-mustaqīm*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Sunnat al-Muḥammadiyya, 1950), 3–9.
100. Hegghammer, "The Transformation," 86.
101. Hegghammer, "The Transformation," 85–87.
102. Al-Lajnat, "Tuḥfat," 185.
103. Al-Lajnat, "Tuḥfat," 186.

104. Al-Lajnat, "Tuḥfat," 187.
105. Abū Muḥammad al-Maqdisī, "Kashf al-Niqāb ʿan Sharīʿat al-Ghāb," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_38438.html, 10–11.
106. Al-Maqdisī, "Kashf al-Niqāb," 16.
107. Al-Maqdisī, "Kashf al-Niqāb," 20–22.
108. Cf. Abū Muḥammad al-Maqdisī, "Al-Dīmuqrāṭiyya dīn," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, n.d., http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_26238.html.
109. Cf. Abū Muḥammad al-Maqdisī, "Naḥnu wa-Ḥamās lasnā ʿalā manhaj wāḥid wa-hum man yuʿalinu dhālika," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, 1425/2004, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_1521.html; Abū Muḥammad al-Maqdisī, "Al-Radd al-amthal ʿalā muftī Ḥamās al-Asṭal," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, 1430/2008–2009, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_33.html. The *muftī* referred to is Yūnis al-Asṭal, who is a member of both Hamas and the ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Qassām Bridgades, a resistance wing created by Hamas in the early 1990s.
110. Al-Maqdisī, "Naḥnu wa-Ḥamās," 4–12.
111. Al-Maqdisī, "Al-Risāla," , 88–104; Abū Muḥammad al-Maqdisī, "Waqafāt maʿa al-Thumrāt al-Jihād," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, n.d., http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_155.html, 91–100. Cf. Wagemakers, *A Quietist Jihadi*, 70.
112. Cf. Samuel Helfont, *Compulsion in Religion: Saddam Hussein, Islam, and the Roots of Insurgencies in Iraq* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).
113. Ḥamūd bin ʿUqlāʾ al-Shuʿaybī, "Maʿnā al-irhāb wa-haqīqatihi," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, 1422/2001, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_516.html, 1.
114. Al-Shuʿaybī, "Maʿnā al-irhāb," 2.
115. Al-Shuʿaybī, "Maʿnā al-irhāb," 4.
116. Al-Shuʿaybī, "Maʿnā al-irhāb," 3.

Chapter 3

1. Al-Bukhārī, *Al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 1, 6 (no. 1).
2. ʿAqīl al-ʿAqīl, "Muftī al-saʿūdīyyah: Takfīr al-muslimīn amr khaṭīr," *Al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ*, April 21, 2001, http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=1&issueno=8180&article=36139&feature= (accessed March 22, 2010). For an English-language discussion of the *Al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* story, see Frank Gardner, "Saudi Mufti Condemns Suicide Bombs," BBC News, April 22, 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1291339.stm (accessed March 22, 2010). Al al-Shaykh (b. 1940) is a member of Saudi Arabia's leading religious family. At a young age, he began to study the Qurʾan at the Ahmad bin Sanan mosque, and at the age of fourteen, he transferred to Institute of Imam al-Daʿwa, where he graduated from the College of Shariʿa in 1962. He actively agitated against the rise of Jihadi-Salafi intellectual trends in Saudi Arabia, as noted in Eric Schmitt and Thom Shanker, "U.S. Adapts Cold-War Idea to Fight Terrorists," *New York Times*, March 18, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/18/washington/18terror.html (accessed March 22, 2011). He succeeded to the position of grand mufti in 1999. For more on the relationship of the Saudi monarchy to the Saudi community of religious scholars (*ʿulamaʾ*), see Joseph A. Kechichian,

"The Role of the Ulama in the Politics of an Islamic State: The Case of Saudi Arabia," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 18, no. 1 (February 1986): 53–71; Al-Sarhan, "The Struggle for Authority," 181–206.

3. Abū Muḥammad al-Maqdisī, "Al-Kawāshif al-Jaliyya fī Kufr al-Dawla al-Saʿūdiyya," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihad, 1989, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_816, 4. See also Madawi al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State: Islamic Voices from a New Generation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 121–213; Wagemakers, *A Quietist Jihadi*, 104–107. I have provided a full translation and annotation of this fatwa in the appendixes.
4. Al-Maqdisī, "Ḥawl Fatwā Muftī," 1. A translation of this fatwa appears in the appendixes.
5. Al-Maqdisī, "Ḥawl Fatwā Muftī," 2.
6. Al-Maqdisī, "Ḥawl Fatwā Mufti," 5.
7. On the events in Egypt and Tunisia from a political scientific perspective, see Marc Lynch, *The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East* (New York: Public Affairs, 2012).
8. For discussions of Bouazizi as a martyr, see Yasmine Ryan, "The Tragic Life of a Street Vendor," Al Jazeera English, January 20, 2011, http:// english.aljazeera.net/indepth/features/2011/01/201111684242518839.html (accessed March 22, 2011). In the article, note especially the proclamation of Bouazizi as a martyr by Mahmoud Ghozlani, a member of the Progressive Democratic Party. Western media outlets also proclaimed Bouazizi a martyr; see Lin Noueihed, "Peddler's Martyrdom Launched Tunisia's Revolution," Reuters, January 19, 2011, http://af.reuters.com/article/libyaNews/idAFLDE70G18J20110119 (accessed January 22, 2011). To this point, it is difficult to identify the earliest mention of Bouazizi as a martyr (*shahīd*) in Arabic-language sources. The debate over his status as a martyr, however, can be seen in the comments accompanying the article covering the initial protests following his death; see "Wafāt al-Būʿazīzī mufajjir iḥtijājāt tūnis," Al Jazeera, January 5, 2011, comment 126, http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/F1312535-2BCE-4A6D-9357-B3CEAFAD09D0.htm (accessed March 11, 2019). In a story on the program *Al-Ittijāh al-Muʿākis* (*Opposite Directions*), that aired slightly more than one month following Bouazizi's death, mention is made of Bouazizi as a martyr; see Fayṣal al-Qāsim, "Thawrat al-Shuʿūb al-ʿArabiyya," Al Jazeera, February 15, 2011, under "Barāmij al-Qanāt," http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/B1166A19-8A07-41D0-94E7-30017A829ADF.htm (accessed March 11, 2019).
9. Abū al-Mundhir al-Shinqīṭī, "Hukm al-muntahir (Ashghal al-nār fī nafsihi)," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, n.d., http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/FAQ/MS_6354.html (accessed March 11, 2019). A Mauritian mufti for whom there is relatively little biographical information, al-Shinqiti is a member of the Lajnat al-Sharīʿa (the Legal Council) of the Minbar and has frequently commented on matters related to the Arab Spring, which related to events in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, and other Arab countries throughout 2011. In recent years, his production has decreased. Al-Shinqiti was largely supportive of the demonstrations, proclaiming them a "great victory for Islam and Muslims." See Abū al-Mundhir al-Shinqīṭī, "Mā ḥukm al-mushārika fī al-thawra al-mawjūda bi-maṣr

al-ān," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, n.d., http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/FAQ/MS_6384.html (accessed March 11, 2019). However, al-Shinqiti was critical of Abu Basir al-Tartusi and his criticism of Jabhat al-Nusra; see Cole Bunzel, "Jihadism's Widening Internal Divide: Intellectual Infighting Heats Up," Jihadica.com, January 23, 2013, http://www.jihadica.com/jihadism%E2%80%99s-widening-internal-divide-intellectual-infighting-heats-up (accessed March 11, 2019).

10. See Messick, *The Calligraphic State*.
11. Ḥamūd bin ʿUqlāʾ Al-Shuʿaybī, "Ḥukm al-ʿAmaliyyāt al-Istishhādiyya," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, 2001, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_5788.html (accessed March 11, 2019), 7, and found translated in the appendixes.
12. Abū ʿUmrū ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm Ḥasān, "Ḥukm al-ʿAmaliyyāt al-Istishhādiyya," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, n.d., http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_13048.html (accessed March 11, 2019), 1.
13. Yūsuf al-ʿUyayrī, "Hal Intaḥarat Ḥawāʾ [Khava] am Istashhadat," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, 2000, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_13005.html (accessed March 11, 2019), 4, cf. 43.
14. Abū Qatāda al-Filasṭīnī, "Jawāz al-ʿAmaliyyāt al-Istishhādiyya wa-innahā Laysat bi-Qatl li-l-Nafs," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, n.d., http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_5864.html (accessed March 11, 2019), 1.
15. Al-Filasṭīni, "Jawāz," 1, citing Abu ʾĪsā al-Tirmidhī, *Al-Jāmiʿ al-Kabīr [Sunan]*, vol. 4, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, Muḥammad Fuʾād ʿAbd al-Bāqī, and Ibrāhīm ʿAṭwat ʿAwaḍ (Cairo: Sharika Maktaba wa Maṭbaʿat Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1395 [1975]), 180 (no. 2399); cf. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad al-Imām Ibn Ḥanbal*, vol. 13, ed. Shuʿayb al-Arnaʾūṭ et al. (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1421 [2001]), 248 (no. 7859); Muḥammad ibn Ḥibbān, *Al-Iḥsān fī Taqrīb Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, vol 7, ed. Shuʿayb al-Arnaʾūṭ (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1421), 176 (no. 2913); Aḥmad bin al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, vol. 3, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1424), 524 (no. 6543).
16. Al-Filasṭīnī, "Jawāz," 2, citing al-Bukhārī, *Al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 2, 96 (no. 1365).
17. Al-Shuʿaybī, "Ḥukm," 1.
18. Qurʾan 4:29–30 is also cited by ʿAyman al-Zawāhirī, "Shifāʾ Ṣudūr al-Muʾminīn," Minbar a-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, 1996, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_13066.html (accessed March 11, 2019), 15, 21, 32, 33; al-ʿUyayrī, "Hal Intaḥarat Ḥawāʾ," 43; Abū Saʿd al-ʿĀmilī, "Al-ʿAmaliyyāt al-Istishhādiyya Dhurwāt Sanām al-Istishhād," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, 2001, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_5818.html (accessed March 11, 2019), 7; Abū Yaḥyā al-Lībī, "Al-Tatarrus fī al-Jihād al-Muʿāṣir," 2006, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_15622.html (accessed March 11, 2019), 2; al-Shinqīṭī, "Ḥukm," n.d.; Abū Humām Bakr bin ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Atharī [Turkī al-Binʿalī], "Mā Ḥukm al-ʿAmaliyyāt al-Istishhādiyya," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, 2011, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/FAQ/MS_30602.html (accessed March 11, 2019), also found translated in the appendixes; Al-Amīn al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Aḥmad, "Al-ʿAmaliyyāt al-Jihādiyya al-Istishhādiyya; bayna al-Mujīzīn wa-l-Māniʾīn," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, n.d., http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_10652.html (accessed March 11, 2019); Ḥasān, "Ḥukm al-ʿAmaliyyāt

al-Istishhādiya," 2; Yāhyā Hāshim Ḥasan Farghal, "Kashf al-Ṭawiyya fī al-ʿAmaliyyāt al-Istishhādiyya," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, n.d., http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_10652.html (accessed March 11, 2019), 8. Qurʾan 2:195 is also cited by al-Zawāhirī, "Shifāʾ," 15–17, 23–29, 34–35, 40; al-ʿUyayrī, "Hal Intaḥarat Ḥawāʾ," 9, 16, 20–25; Ḥasān, 10, 17, 19, 20, 21, 24–27; Farghal, "Kashf," 8. Qurʾan 6.151 is also cited by al-Atharī [al-Binʿalī], "Mā";al-Lībī, "Al-Tatarrus," 4.

19. Al-Lībī, "Al-Tatarrus," 4.
20. Al-Atharī [al-Binʿalī], "Mā."
21. Abū Muṣʿab al-Sūrī, "Al-Daʿwat al-Muqāwama al-Islāmiyya al-ʿĀlamiyya," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, 1425 [2004], http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_11347 (accessed March 11, 2019), 1015–1016.
22. On the nature of this split, see Abdullah bin Khaled al-Saud, "The Spiritual Teacher and His Truants: The Influence and Relevance of Abu Mohammad al-Maqdisi," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 41, no. 9 (2018): 736–754.
23. Al-ʿUyayrī, "Hal Intaḥarat Ḥawāʾ," 43, cf. Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmiʿ li-Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, vol. 1, ed. Aḥmad al-Bardūnī and Ibrahīm Aṭafayyish (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Maṣriyya, 1384 [1964]), 156. The *tafsīr* is also cited by Ḥasān, *Ḥukm*, 2–3.
24. Ḥasān, "Ḥukm," 2. Ḥasān cites and seems to synthesize his citation from Abū ʿAwāna Isfaraynī, *Mustakhraj Abī Awāna*, vol. 1, ed. Ayman bin ʿĀrif al-Dimashqī (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 1419 [1998]), 51 (no. 33); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Sunan*, vol. 8, 343 (no. 16834); al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, 72 (no. 3062), vol. 5, 132 (no. 4203), vol. 8, 124 (no. 6606); Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 13, 453 (no. 8090); Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Mukhtaṣar*, vol. 1, ed. Muḥammad Fuʾad ʿAbd al-Bāqī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, n.d.), 105 (no. 111); Abū al-Qāsim al-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Maʿjim al-Awsaṭ*, vol. 3, ed. Ṭāriq bin ʿAwaḍ Allāh bin Muḥammad (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥaramayn, n.d.), 356 (no. 33939). For the other authors, see al-ʿĀmilī, "Al-ʿAmaliyyāt," 3, with Muslim, *Al-Musnad*, vol. 1, 105 (no. 111); al-Shinqīṭī, with Muslim, *Al-Musnad*, vol. 1, 105 (no. 111); al-Binʿali, with Muslim, *Al-Musnad*, vol. 1, 105 (no. 111).
25. Qurʾan 55:56.
26. Al-Zawāhirī, "Shifāʾ," 15–17, 23–29, 34, 35, 40; al-ʿUyayrī, "Hal," 9, 16, 20–25; Ḥasān, "Ḥukm," 10, 17, 19, 20–27; Farghal, "Kashf," 8.
27. Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 2, 361.
28. Al-Zawāhirī, "Shifāʾ," 25, cites Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayyālisī, *Musnad Abī Dawūd al-Ṭayyālisī*, vol. 1, ed. Muḥammad bin ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Egypt: Dār Hajar, 1419 [1999]), 491 (no. 600); Abū ʿabd al-Raḥmān al-Nisāʾī, *Al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, vol. 10, ed. Ḥasan ʿAbd al-Munʿim Shalabī (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1421 [2001]), 28 (no. 10962); al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Sunan*, vol. 9, 78 (no. 17925); al-, *Sunan*, vol. 5, 212 (no. 2972); Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥākim, *Al-Mustadrik ʿalā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, vol. 2, ed. Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1411 [1990]), 94 (no. 2434). Al-ʿĀmilī, "Al-ʿAmaliyyāt, 3, and al-ʿUyayrī, "Hal Intaḥarat Ḥawāʾ," 9, cite al-Ṭayyālisī, *Musnad*, vol. 1, 491 (no. 600); al-Tirmidhī, Sunan, vol. 5, 212 (no. 2972); and al-Nisāʾī, *Al-Sunan*, vol. 10, 28 (no. 10962). Al-Atharī [al-Binʿali], "Mā," 4, cites al-Nisāʾī, *Sunan*, vol. 10, 28 (no. 10962). Al-Maqdisī, "Ḥawl," 4, cites al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*,

vol. 5, 212 (no. 2972); and al-Ṭayyālisī, *Musnad*, vol. 1, 491 (no. 600). Abū ʿAmr, "Ḥukm," 19, cites al-Nisāʾī, *Al-Sunan*, vol. 10, 28 (no. 10962); al-Ṭayyālisī, *Musnad*, vol. 1, 491 (no. 600); and al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, vol. 5, 212 (no. 2972). Al-Zawāhirī, al-ʿĀmilī, al-ʿUyayrī, and Ḥasān claim that a version of this hadith was transmitted by Ibn Ḥabbān and Muslim, but I was unable to locate these. Al-ʿĀmilī, however, does cite the discussion of Nāsir al-Dīn al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Mawārid al-Ẓamān ilā Zawāʾid Ibn Ḥabbān*, vol. 2 (Riyadh: Dār al-Ṣamīʿī ʾĪlāf al-Dawliyya, 1422 [2001]), 118–119, which does cite the narration of Ibn Ḥabbān.

29. Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 2, 361, who, in his commentary on Qurʾan 2:195 cites from al-Ṭayyālisī, *Musnad*, vol. 1, 491 (no. 600); and al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, vol. 5, 212 (no. 2972).
30. Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 2, 361.
31. Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 2, 362.
32. Al-ʿUyayrī, *Hal Intaḥarat Ḥawāʾ*, 27; al-Filastini, "Jawāz," 5; al-Zawāhirī, "Shifāʾ," 16; al-ʾĀmilī, "Al-ʿAmaliyyāt; Sulaymān al-ʿUlwān, "Ḥukm al-ʿAmaliyyāt al-Istishhādiyya 2," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l Jihād, October 8, 2000, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_5791.html (accessed March 19, 2019), 2; al-Shuʿaybī, "Ḥukm," 3; ʿAlī Khuḍayr bin al-Khuḍayr, "Ḥukm al-ʿAmaliyyāt al-Istishhādiyya," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, n.d., http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_5789.html, 1; al-Bishr bin Fahd al-Bishr, "Ḥukm al-ʿAmaliyyāt al-Istishhādiyya," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, n.d. http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_5733.html, 2; al-Atharī [al-Binʿalī], "Mā";, Ḥasān, "Ḥukm," 3–10; al-Amīn al-Ḥajj, "Al-ʿAmaliyyāt," 3; and Ḥāmid ʿAlī, "Ḥukm," 6, all cite from Muslim, *Al-Musnad*, vol. 4, 2299 (no. 3005). Note that al-Atharī [al-Binʿalī] also attributes this hadith erroneously to al-Bukhārī.
33. The relation of this narrative to the Qurʾan and to traditions external to the Islamic tradtion is traced by David Cook, "The *Aṣḥāb al-Ukhdūd*: History and *Ḥadīth* in a Martyrological Sequence," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 34 (2008): 125–148.
34. Muslim, *Al-Musnad*, vol. 4, 2299 (no. 3005).
35. Al-Khuḍayr, "Ḥukm," 2. Cf. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ al-fatāwā*, vol. 28, 540.
36. Al-Shuʿaybī, "Ḥukm," 3.
37. Al-Shuʿaybī, "Hukm," 5.
38. Qurʾan 9:111 and 8:60, respectively.
39. Authors citing both 2:207 and 9:111 within the same legal argument include al-Zawāhirī, "Shifāʾ," 26–30; al-ʿUyayrī, "Hal," 7, 21–23; al-Shuʿaybī, "Ḥukm," 2–4; al-Maqdisī, "Ḥawl," 2; al-Atharī [al-Binʿalī], "Mā"; Ḥasān, "Ḥukm," 6, 23–27; al-Amīn al-Ḥājj, "Al-ʿAmaliyyāt," 2; Farghal, "Kashf," 4–8.
40. Al-ʿUyayrī, *Hal*, 11, cites Muslim, *Al-Musnad*, vol. 3, 1511 (no. 1902), as doal-Filasṭīnī, "Jawāz," 3; al-Zawāhirī, "Shifāʾ," 22; and al-ʿĀmilī, "Al-ʿAmaliyyāt," 2. Al-Shuʿaybī, "Ḥukm," 4, and al-Atharī [al-Binʿalī], "Mā," both cite from al-Bayhāqī, *Al-Sunan*, vol. 9, 77 (no. 17922).
41. Al-ʿUyayrī, "Hal," 11–12, cites from Muslim, *Al-Musnad*, vol. 3, 1509 (no. 1901), as do al-Filasṭīnī, "Jawāz," 4; al-Zawāhirī, "Shifāʾ," 22; al-ʿĀmilī, "Al-ʿAmaliyyāt," 2; al-Atharī [al-Binʿalī], "Mā"; and Farghal, "Kashf," 2.

42. Al-Shuʿaybī, "Ḥukm," 7. In her interviews with Palestinians who had attempted martyrdom operations, Nasra Hassan, "Letters from Gaza: An Arsenal of Believers," *New Yorker*, November 19, 2001, http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2001/11/19/011119fa_FACT1#ixzz24mrYNLhE (accessed June 2, 2011) was told by "S." that when he was training for his martyrdom operation, he was "in a constant state of worship. . . . If the Israelis only knew how joyful we were they would whip us to death!"
43. Farghal, "Kashf," 3.
44. Al-ʿUyayrī, "Hal," 47.
45. Al-ʿUyayrī, "Hal," 15.
46. Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 2, 363, cited in Zawāhirī, "Shifāʾ," 25; and al-ʿUyayrī, "Hal," 15.
47. Al-ʿUyayri, "Hal," 45.
48. Al-ʿUyayrī, "Hal," 41.
49. Al-ʿUyayrī, "Hal," 41.
50. David Cook, "Suicide Attacks or 'Martyrdom Operations' in Contemporary *Jihad* Literature," *Nova Religio: Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 6, no. 1 (2002): 20.
51. Cook, *Understanding Jihad*, 145.
52. Cook, "Islamism and Jihadism," 186.
53. For further biographical information and a bibliography of texts, see Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence*, 119–125. See also Feryal Salem, *The Emergence of Early Sufi Piety and Sunnī Scholasticism: ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak and the Formation of Early Sunnī Identity in the Second Islamic Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).
54. Jonathan A. C. Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World* (New York: OneWorld, 2009), 66. According to Brown, "critics like al-Bukhārī and Ibn ʿAdī had examined the hadiths of master transmitters like al-Zuhrī, Mālik, Ibn al-Mubārak or Qutayba b. Saʿīd and found that they were corroborated to such a great extent that they could be relied upon for a number of uncorroborated *ḥadīths* as well."
55. Ibn Abī Hātim, *Al-Jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, 2:30–31, cited by Brown, *Hadith*, 70.
56. Michael Bonner, "Some Observations Concerning the Early Development of Jihad on the Arab-Byzantine Frontier," *Studia Islamica* 75 (1992): 20. Usama ibn Munqidh's account of the Crusades were published in *The Book of Contemplation: Islam and the* Crusades, trans. Paul M. Cobb (New York: Penguin, 2008).
57. See David Cook, "Muslim Apocalyptic and *Jihād*," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 20 (1996): 66–104; Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief*; and Bonner, "Some Observations," respectively. See also Christopher Melchert, "Ibn al-Mubārak's *Kitāb al-Jihād* and Early Renunciant Literature," in *Violence in Islamic Thought from the Qurʾān to the Mongols*, ed. Robert Gleave and István T. Kristó-Nagy (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 49–69; and Mustafa Baig, "The Non-Military Aspects of *Kitab al-Jihad*," in *Twenty-First Century Jihad: Law, Society and Military Action*, ed. Elisabeth Kendall and Ewan Stein (London: I. B. Tauris, 2015), 97–111.
58. Ibn al-Mubārak, *Kitāb al-Jihād*, 37–38 (nos. 15–16).

59. Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief*, 185.
60. Al-ʿAlī, "*Ḥukm*," 1.
61. Ibn al-Mubārak, *Kitāb al-Jihād*, 29 (no. 4).
62. Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence*, 124.
63. Ibn al-Mubārak, *Kitāb al-Jihād*, 7 (nos. 31–32).
64. Ibn al-Mubārak, *Kitāb al-Jihād*, 77 (no. 68).
65. Ibn al-Mubārak, *Kitāb al-Jihād*, 9 (no. 34).
66. David Cook, *Martyrdom in Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 128.
67. Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief*, 184.
68. See Bonner, "Some Observations," 89–90.
69. Talal Asad, *On Suicide Bombing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 67.
70. Asad, *On Suicide Bombing*, 91. It is unclear why Asad argues that Jihadi-Salafis do not use the language of sacrifice. See, for example, Melissa Finn, *Al-Qaeda and Sacrifice: Martyrdom, War, and Politics* (New York: Pluto, 2012).
71. Valantasis, "A Theory," 550–551.
72. National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002), 233.
73. In Hans G. Kippenberg and Tilman Seidensticker, eds., *The 9/11 Handbook* (London: Equinox, 2006), 80.
74. In Kippenberg and Seidensticker, *The 9/11 Handbook*, 80.
75. In Kippenberg and Seidensticker, *The 9/11 Handbook*, 87. The relevant citation reads: "Do not act out of vengeance for yourself, but make your assault and everything else be for God Almighty. This is the example of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib—may God be pleased with him—who, when he battled one of the disbelievers, was spat upon by him. [ʿAlī] held his sword and did not strike in retaliation. When the battle finished, the companions [of Muhammad] asked him about his action . . . and he said, 'When he spat upon me, I feared that I would strike him out of my own desire for vengeance, so I held my sword.' . . . Then, when he had summoned the correct intention *istaḥḍara al-niyya*], he stood and struck him."
76. Qurʾan 4:74. The full verse reads: "Let them fight in the way of God, those who would sell the life of this world for the Hereafter. And whosoever fights in the way of God—whether he is slain or victorious—We shall grant him a great reward" (*fal-yuqātil fī sabīl Allāh alladhīna yashrūna al-ḥayāt al-dunyā bi-l-akhira wa min yuqātil fī sabīl Allāh fa-yuqtal aw yaghlib fa-sawfa nuʾtīhi ajar ʿaẓīm*).
77. In Kippenberg and Seidensticker, *The 9/11 Handbook*, 85.
78. Kippenberg and Seidensticker, *The 9/11 Handbook*, 55.
79. This is not unique to the September 11, 2001, action. In the months immediately prior to and following the 2003 invasion of Iraq, a number of texts appeared admonishing the Iraqi people to resist any invading and occupying forces. In these messages were exhortations to the Muslim communities of Iraq to prepare their intentions (*niyyāt*) and wills for jihad. At the close of his "Letter to the People of Iraq in These Critical Times" ("Risāla ilā ahl al-ʿIrāq fī hadhihi al-aḥdāth al-ʿaṣība"), Muhammad Faraj reassures Iraqi fighters that there is a "perfect reward that God prepares for those who

struggle in his path [*li-l-mujāhidīn fī sabīlihi*], when they strengthen intention [*niyya*] and they are faithful to the objective [*qaṣd*], and they fight to make the word of God utmost in the land." See Muḥammad al-Farāj, "Risāla ilā Ahl al-ʿIrāq fī hadhihi al-Aḥdāth al-ʿAṣība," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, April 5, 2002, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_13366.html (accessed March 11, 2019). A similar exhortation is made by Usama bin Ladin in his "Letter to Our Brothers in Iraq 1" ("Risāla ilā Ikhwāninā al-Muslimīn fī al-ʿIrāq 1"), when he states, at the opening of his message, that "sincerity of intention [*ikhlāṣ al-niyya*] while fighting in the path of God" is among the "important values [*al-maʿānī al-muhimma*]" that he wishes to emphasize. See Usāma bin Lādin, "Risāla ilā Ikhwāninā al-Muslimīn fī al-ʿIrāq 1," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, February 11, 2003, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_24806.html (accessed March 11, 2019). A full English translation of this letter is available in Bin Ladin, *Messages to the World*, 179–185.

80. Al-ʿAwlaki, "44 Ways."
81. See Scott Shane and Souad Mekkhennet, "Imam's Path from Condemning Terror to Preaching Jihad," *New York Times*, May 9, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/09/world/09awlaki.html (accessed June 3, 2015); Sudarsan Raghavan, "Cleric Says He Was Confidant to Hasan," *Washington Post*, November 16, 2009, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/11/15/AR2009111503160.html (accessed December 2, 2018); Josh Meyer, "U.S.-Born Cleric Linked to Airline Bombing Plot," *Los Angeles Times*, May 7, 2010, http://www.latimes.com/news/nation-and-world/la-na-terror-intel31-2009dec31,0,4146208,full.story (accessed June 3, 2010).
82. ʿĪsā bin Saʿd Āl ʿAwshin, "39 Wasīla li-Khidmat al-Jihād wa-l-Mushāraka fīhi," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, n.d., http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_2538 (accessed March 11, 2019). A biography of ʿAwshin was not published at the time of this writing on the Minbar, but one composed in English and Arabic can be found at the Internet Archive: "The Biography of the Shaykh Shahīd, ʿIsā bin Saʿd ibn Muhammad al-ʿUshn al-Khālidī (May Allah Have Mercy upon Him)," http://ia600308.us.archive.org/0/items/Awshin/ShaykhIsa.pdf. ʿAwshin was born 1397/1977 in Riyadh. He studied at Imam University around the time al-Shuʿaybi was an instructor there. After al-ʿUyayri's death, ʿAwshin composed a biography (*tarjama*) for him that lauded his service to the jihad. ʿAwshin was killed by Saudi government forces in 2004.
83. It must be noted that it is unclear if al-ʿAwlaki would use *niyya* for intention. As the work was originally composed in English and to my knowledge never translated by al-ʿAwlaki to Arabic, I am unsure if al-ʿAwlaki means *niyya*.
84. ʿAwshin, "Wasīla," 9.
85. Al-ʿAwlaki, "44 Ways," 3.
86. Al-ʿAwlaki, "44 Ways," 3.
87. ʿAwshin, "Wasīla," 7.
88. Mukhtar Hassan, "What to Expect in the Jihad," *Inspire* 5 (Spring 2011), Jihadology.net, https://jihadology.net/2011/03/29/al-qa%E2%80%99idah-in-the-arabian-peninsula%E2%80%99s-al-mala%E1%B8%A5im-media-releases-inspire-magazine-issue-5 (accessed October 1, 2018), 65.

89. Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief*, 155–156.
90. Asad, *On Suicide Bombing*, 91.

Chapter 4

1. Ibn Abī Shayba, *Al-Kitāb al-Muṣannaf fī al-Aḥādīth wa-l-Āthār*, ed. Kamal Yūsuf al-Ḥūth (Riyadh: Maktab al-Rushd, 1409 [1988]), vol. 4, 208 (19356).
2. Abū Bakr al-Baghdādī, "This Is What Allāh and His Messenger Promised Us," *Rumiyah* 3 (Ṣafar 1438), Jihadology.net, https://jihadology.net/2017/02/04/new-release-of-the-islamic-states-magazine-rome-6 (accessed March 19, 2019), 5.
3. On the prison stay of al-Zarqawi, see Joby Warrick, *Black Flags: The Rise of ISIS* (New York: Doubleday, 2015), 15–45.
4. "Zarqawi 'Defends Jordan Attacks'" BBC News, November 18, 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4450590.stm.
5. See Abū Muḥammad al-Maqdisī, "Al-Zarqāwī; munāṣira wa-munāsiḥa," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, n.d. http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_7930.html (accessed March 19, 2019); al-Maqdisī, "Waqafāt."
6. Quoted in Nibras Kazimi, "A Virulent Ideology in Mutation: Zarqawi Upstages Maqdisi," in *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, vol. 2, ed. Hillel Fradkin, Husain Haqqani, and Eric Brown (Washington, D.C.: Hudson Institute, 2005), 66. For a transcript of the interview in Arabic, see Yāsir Abū Hilāla, "Abū Muḥammad al-Maqdisī . . . al-salafiyya al-jihādiyya," Al Jazeera, 2005 http://www.aljazeera.net/programs/pages/1f41e8dd-57e3-4d75-9eba-ab57864334d5 (accessed 19 March 2019).
7. Kazimi, "A Virulent Ideology," 68.
8. Abū Baṣīr al-Ṭarṭūsī, "Maḥādhīr al-ʿAmaliyyāt al-Istishhādiiyya aw Intiḥāriyya," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, 2005, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_13000.html (accessed March 19, 2019), 1.
9. Al-Ṭarṭūsī, "Maḥādhīr," 4.
10. Al-Ṭarṭūsī, "Maḥādhīr, 4; cf. al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 16, 286–288.
11. Al-Shuʿaybī, "Ḥukm," 5.
12. Al-Zawāhirī, "Shifāʾ," 32.
13. Edward William Lane, "غ-م-س" in *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 2 (London: Williams and Norgate, 1863), 2349; Ibn Manẓūr, "غ-م-س" in *Lisān al-ʿArab* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādir, 1968), 3297.
14. Al-Maqdisī, "Ḥawl," 4; al-Atharī [al-Binʿalī], "Mā"; al-Shuʿaybī, "Ḥukm," 5–6.
15. Ḥasān, "Ḥukm," 6, 14, 15, 23.
16. Ḥasān, "Ḥukm," 7.
17. Al-Zawāhirī, "Shifāʾ," 15; cf. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ*, vol. 28, 540.
18. Ḥasān, "Ḥukm," 15. The hadith reads: "The Messenger of God, may God's blessings and peace be upon him, said, 'Three types of person will taste of the delights of faith [*ḥalāwat al-īmān*]: one who loves God and God's Messenger more than all others; one who loves another for the sake of God; and one who detests disbelief [*kufr*] as much as he loathes the idea of being cast into the fire.'" The hadith appears in al-Bukhārī,

Al-Jāmiʿ, vol. 1, 12 (no. 16);al-Ḥajjāj, *Al-Musnad*, vol. 1, 66 (no. 43); al-Nisāʾī, *Al-Sunan*, vol. 8, 94 (no. 4987); al-Tirmidhī, *Al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 4, 311 (no. 2634); Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 19, 61 (no. 12002).

19. Abū Zakariyyā Muḥī al-Dīn al-Nawawī, *Al-Minhāj Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj*, vol. 13 (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1392 [1972]), 46.
20. Al-Shuʿaybī, "Ḥukm," 4. The story of al-Baraʾ bin Malik is also cited by Ḥasān, "Ḥukm," 20; al-Atharī [al-Binʿalī], "Mā"; al-Maqdisī, "Ḥawl," 3–4; al-ʿUyayrī, "Hal," 29. Salama ibn al-Akwaʿ is cited by Abū ʿAmr, 17–18, 21, 29; al-Atharī [al-Binʿalī], "Mā"; and al-ʿUyayrī, 13–14, 17, 25, 39–40. Two biographies, those of Salama and al-Baraʾ bin Malik, will suffice to illustrate the precedent of renunciation established by these exmples.The narrative of Salama bin al-Akwaʿ is recorded by Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* (Beirut: Dār al-Turāth, 1387 [1967]), vol. 2, 596–603. Al-Ṭabarī suggests that the events surrounding Salama occurred in either 6 or 7 AH. Salama repeatedly confronted a band of polytheists (*mushrikūn*) alone in the midst of a raid and in the midst of overwhelming odds of survival against him. The narrative of al-Baraʾ bin Malik (brother of Anas bin Malik, eponymous founder of the Maliki *madhhab*) is located in al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 3, 290–94, and vol. 4, 84–85. He was known for his actions in battle, particularly his fighting at the Battle of Yamama, and his continual desire to seek God in an act of martyrdom.
21. Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghāzālī, *Iḥyāʾ fī ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Maʾrifa, n.d.), 319, cited by al-Atharī [al-Binʿalī], "Mā"; Ḥasān, "Ḥukm," 26; al-Shuʿaybī, "Ḥukm," 5; al-ʿUyayrī, "Hal," 23–24.
22. Ḥasān, "Ḥukm," 27.
23. Cf. Ḥasān, "Ḥukm," 24; Zawāhirī, "Shifāʾ," 26; ʿUyayrī, "Hal," 23; al-Shuʿaybī, "Ḥukm," 5.
24. Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 2, 364.
25. Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 2, 364.
26. Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām*, vol. 1, 319.
27. Aḥmad bin Ibrāhīm bin Muḥammad ibn al-Naḥḥās, *Mashāriʿ al-ashwāq ilā maṣāriʿ al-ʿushāq* 2 vols., edited by Idrīs Muḥammad ʿAlī and Muḥammad Khālid Isṭanbūlī (Beirut: Dār al-Bashāʾir al-Islāmiyya, 1423), vol. 2, 1029; cf. Ḥasān, "Ḥukm," 47; al-ʿUyayrī, "Hal," 34. See also Ibn al-Naḥḥās, *Mashāriʿ*, vol. 1, 540; cf. al-Zawāhirī, "Shifāʾ," 29; al-Shuʿaybī, "Ḥukm," 4; and al-Atharī [al-Binʿalī], "Mā."
28. Ṣalāḥ bin ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ al-Khālidī, "Muqqadima," in Ibn al-Naḥḥās, *Mashāriʿ*, Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihad, n.d. http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_736 (accessed March 19, 2019), 3.
29. Anwar al-ʿAwlaki, "Mashari Al-Ashwaq ila Masari al-Ushaaq (Audio Lectures)," Archive.org, n.d. https://archive.org/details/MashariAl-AshwaqIlaMasariAl-Ushaaq_201811 (accessed March 19, 2019). For the Arabic version used by al-ʿAwlaki see Ṣalāḥ bin ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ al-Khālidī, *Tahdhīb: Mashāriʿ al-ashwāq ilā maṣāriʿ al-ʿushāq*, 1998 http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_9459.html (accessed March 12, 2019).
30. Ibn al-Naḥḥās, *Mashāriʿ*, vol. 1, 128.
31. Ibn al-Naḥḥās, *Mashāriʿ*, vol. 1, 135–138.

32. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 31–39.
33. Khaled Abou El Fadl, "Islam and the Theology of Power," *Middle East Report* 221 (Winter 2001) http://www.merip.org/mer/mer221/islam-theology-power (accessed March 19, 2019).
34. Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 447–449.
35. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, vol. 2, 328–331. Translations from Cook, *Commanding Right*, 450.
36. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, vol. 2, 320.
37. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, vol. 2, 320.
38. Rebecca Molloy, "Deconstructing Ibn Taymiyya's Views on Suicidal Missions," *CTC Sentinel* 2, no. 3 (March 2009) https://ctc.usma.edu/deconstructing-ibn-taymiyyas-views-on-suicidal-missions (accessed March 19, 2019).
39. Molloy, "Deconstructing."
40. Molloy, "Deconstructing."
41. Molloy, "Deconstructing."
42. Al-Ẓawāhirī, *Shifāʾ*, 50.
43. Al-Zawāhirī, "Shifāʾ," 51.
44. Al-Zawāhirī, "Shifāʾ," 56.
45. Al-Lībī, "Al-Tatarrus," 7.
46. Al-Lībī, "Al-Tatarrus," 6.
47. Cf. al-Lībī, "Al-Tatarrus," 11; and al-Zawāhirī, "Shifāʾ," 52, for the discussion of al-Ṭāʾif. Cf. al-Lībī, "Al-Tatarrus," 13; and al-Zawāhirī, "Shifāʾ," 57–58, for the discussions of *bayāt*.
48. Al-ʿĀnī, Al-Qawl al-Mubayyin fī Mafhūm al-Tatarrus wa-Sḥkāmuhu fī al-Dīn," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, 2004, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_15626.html (accessed March 19, 2019), 5.
49. Dawoody, *The Islamic Law*, 117.
50. Al-ʿĀnī, "Al-Qawl," 15.
51. Al-ʿĀnī, "Al-Qawl," 15.
52. Al-ʿĀnī, "Al-Qawl," 15.
53. Dawoody, *The Islamic Law*, 118.
54. Cf. al-Ẓawāhirī, *Shifāʾ*, 50 and al-ʿĀnī, *Qawl*, 7, respectively.
55. Qurʾan 48:25.
56. Al-Zawāhirī, "Shifāʾ," 50; cf. al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 16, 283–287.
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63. Zawāhirī, "Shifāʾ," 53. Cf. al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām*, vol. 3, 395–396.
64. Al-ʿĀnī, "Al-Qawl," 11; cf. al-Shāfiʿī, *Al-Umm*, vol. 4, 260.
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90. Al-ʿUyayrī, "Hal," 46–47.
91. Al-Maqdisī, "Ḥawl," 6.
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Chapter 5

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42. The theme of hearing and answering the call to Islam is present throughout the first issue of *Dabiq*.
43. See, for example, the illustration accompanying a narration in *Dabiq* 1 (Ramaḍān 1435): 31, Jihadology.net, https://jihadology.net/2014/07/05/al-%E1%B8%A5ayat-media-center-presents-a-new-issue-of-the-islamic-states-magazine-dabiq-1 (accessed June 1, 2018). The narration reads, in ISIS translation, "Allah's Messenger said, 'I order you with five things that Allah ordered me with: Jamaʿah, Samʿ (listening), Taʿah (Obedience), Hijrah and Jihad." ISIS cites the prophetic narration collections of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and al-Tirmidhi but does not cite which collection. ʿAbdullāh ʿAzzām cites a version of the narration in his "Itḥāf al-ʿIbād bi-Faḍāʾil al-Jihād," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, n.d. http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_9005 (accessed June 1, 2018), 7.
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Conclusion

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and Cameroon), Liwaʾ al-Akhdar (Yemen), Khurasan (Afghanistan and Pakistan), Caucasus (Russia), Aden Abyan (Yemen), Shabwa (Yemen), Hadramawt (Yemen), Sana (Yemen), and al-Baydaʾ (Yemen). Missing from the video were the governates of Idlib (Syria), Sahil, and Bahrayn. The film also did not make a mention of Somalia (although at least a few members of al-Shabaab have pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi), nor did it mention military units that ISIS had boasted of in Turkey, France, Tunisia, Lebanon, Bangladesh, and the Philippines. See William McCants, "The Polarizing Effect of Islamic State Aggression on the Global Jihadist Movement," *CTC Sentinel* 9, no. 7 (July 2016): 20–23.

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23. For the administration of *zakat*, see Al-Furqān Media, "And They Gave *Zakat*," video file, Jihadology.net, June 17, 2015, https://jihadology.net/2015/06/17/al-furqan-media-presents-a-new-video-message-from-the-islamic-state-and-they-gave-zakah (accessed March 19, 2019). The text mentioned in the video exists; see Maktabat al-Himma, *Irshād al-hudā ilā fiqh al-zakāt* (n.p.: Maktabat al-Himma, 1437 [2017]), Archive.org, https://archive.org/stream/ad2017_tutanota_20170609_0104/%D8%A5%D8%B1%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%AF%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%A9%20%D9%81%D9%8A%20%D9%81%D9%82%D9%87%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%A9#page/n11 (accessed March 19, 2019).
24. For a collection of fatwas issued by the office, see Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi, "Unseen Islamic State Fatwas on Jihad and Sabaya," Jihadology.net, September 25, 2015, https://jihadology.net/2015/09/25/the-archivist-unseen-islamic-state-fatwas-on-jihad-and-sabaya (accessed March 19, 2019). For a critical review of ISIS development of sexual slavery and rape, see Ali, "Redeeming Slavery."
25. See "Healthcare in the Khilafa," *Dabiq* 9 (Shaʿbān 1436): 24–26, Jihadology.net, https://jihadology.net/2015/05/21/al-ḥayat-media-center-presents-a-new-issue-of-the-islamic-states-magazine-dabiq-9 (accessed March 19, 2019).
26. Rukmini Callimachi, "ISIS Files: When the Terrorists Run City Hall" *New York Times*, April 4, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/04/04/world/middleeast/isis-documents-mosul-iraq.html (accessed March 19, 2019).
27. See, for example, the media training guide produced by ISIS, Maktabat al-Himma, *Ayyuhā al-ʿIlāmī*. In the guide, a series of qurʾanic verses and citations from jurists—including Hamud bin ʿUqlaʾ al-Shuʿaybi—are given to argue that those involved in media enterprises are also fighters in God's cause. For a commentary on this, see Winter, *Media Jihad*.
28. Ajnad Media Foundation, "Dawlatī Bāqiyya," mp3 file, Jihadology.net, June 6, 2017, https://jihadology.net/2017/06/06/new-nashid-from-the-islamic-state-my-state-remains. For a full and alternative English translation, see Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "'Dawlati Baqiya': New Nasheed from the Islamic State's Ajnad Media," Aymennjawad.org, http://www.aymennjawad.org/2017/06/dawlati-baqiya-new-nasheed-from-the-islamic-state (accessed July 12, 2018). For an Arabic transcription of lyrics, see Ajnad Media Foundation, "Dawlatī Bāqiyya" ("My State Remains"), mp3 file, on Baytalmasadir.com, June 6, 2017, https://baytalmasadir.com/2017/06/06/nashid-islamic-state-ajnad-foundation-my-state-remains (accessed June 15, 2017).
29. For the audio, see Ajnad Media Foundation, "Dawlatī lā tuqharu," mp3 file, Jihadology.net, 2017, https://jihadology.net/2017/11/18/new-nashid-from-the-islamic-state-my-state-is-unbeatable. For a full and alternative translation, see Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi, "My State Will Not Be Vanquished," Aymennjawad.org, November 21, 2017, http://www.aymennjawad.org/2017/11/my-state-will-not-be-vanquished-new-nasheed-from (accessed July 12, 2018).

30. Brett McGurk, Twitter.com, October 17, 2017, https://twitter.com/brett_mcgurk/status/920418521640833025.
31. Burke, "Rise and Fall."
32. Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi, "Archive of Islamic State Documents, Specimen G: Educational Plans of the Diwan al-Taʿleem in Raqqa Province," Aymennjawad.org, January 27, 2015, http://www.aymennjawad.org/2015/01/archive-of-islamic-state-administrative-documents (accessed 19 March 2019).
33. "'How to Be a Good Little Jihadi': Extremists Release New School Textbooks, Curriculum in Mosul," Niqash.org, n.d., http://www.niqash.org/en/articles/society/5148/Extremists-Release-New-School-Textbooks-Curriculum-in-Mosul.htm (accessed March 19, 2019).
34. Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi, "Archive of Islamic State Documents, Specimen H: Announcement of Beginning of School Term," Aymennjawad.org, January 27, 2015, http://www.aymennjawad.org/2015/01/archive-of-islamic-state-administrative-documents (accessed March 19, 2019).
35. Olidort, *Inside the Caliphate's Classroom*, 2. See also Media Office of Wilāyat al-Khayr, "Iʿādat fatḥ al-mudāris" ("Preparing for the Victory of the Teacher"), Jihadology.net, February 6, 2015, https://jihadology.net/2015/02/06/new-video-message-from-the-islamic-state-reopening-schools-with-the-new-curriculum-wilayat-al-khayr (accessed March 19, 2019).
36. Olidort, *Inside the Caliphate's Classroom*, 13–24.
37. Olidort, *Inside the Caliphate's Classroom*, 30.
38. Maktabat al-Himma, *Al-Iʿdād al-Badanī: al-Mustawā al-Thānī*, (n.p.: Maktabat al-Himma, 1437), Jihadology.net, https://jihadology.net/wp-content/uploads/_pda/2015/10/the-islamic-state-physical-preparation.pdf (accessed March 19, 2019), 4.
39. Omar Abdullah, "ISIS Teaches Children How to Behead in Camps," ABC News, September 6, 2014, https://abcnews.go.com/International/isis-teaches-children-behead-training-camps/story?id=25303940 (accessed March 19, 2019); see also Katrin Kuntz and Andy Spyra, "Life after Islamic State: 'They Taught Us How to Decapitate a Person," *Spiegel*, April 14, 2017, http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/mosul-schools-reopen-after-islamic-state-occupation-a-1142905.html (accessed March, 19 2019).
40. Maktabat al-Himma, *Al-Riyāḍiyyāt li-l-Khāmis al-Ibtidāʾī*, (n.p.: Maktabat al-Himma, 1437 [2015]), 1–70. Few copies of the text remain online. I maintain a personal copy. For a discussion of the textbook, including an example of the mathematics problem, see Niqash, "Back to School in Mosul: The ISIS Curriculum," The Daily Beast, April 13, 2017, https://www.thedailybeast.com/back-to-school-in-mosul-the-isis-curriculum (accessed February 24, 2019).
41. Maktabat al-Himma, *Al-Riyāḍiyyāt*, 25.
42. Maktabat al-Himma, "The Spelling Teacher," Jihadology.net, September 3, 2017, https://jihadology.net/2017/09/03/new-video-message-from-the-islamic-state-the-spelling-teacher (accessed March 19, 2019).
43. Weapons captures by fighters were not uncommon. See, for example, Thomas Gibbons-Neff, "General: U.S. Equipment Captured by Islamic State Was Lost during

Gun Battle," *Washington Post*, August 9, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2016/08/08/u-s-military-equipment-captured-by-the-islamic-state-might-have-come-from-special-operations-forces (accessed March 4, 2019).

44. Media Office of Wilāyat al-Khayr, "Ilā abnāʾ yahūd" ("To the Sons of the Jews"), Jihadology.net, December 3, 2015, https://jihadology.net/2015/12/03/new-video-message-from-the-islamic-state-to-the-sons-of-the-jews-wilayat-al-khayr (accessed December 7, 2015). The video has been removed from Jihadology.com. A summary of the film was written by Denise Calnan, "ISIS Child Soldiers Filmed Executing Prisonsers after Video Game-Style Maze Race," Independent.ie, December 4, 2015, https://www.independent.ie/world-news/middle-east/isis-child-soldiers-filmed-executing-prisoners-after-video-gamestyle-maze-race-34258555.html (accessed December 7, 2015).
45. Souad Mekhennet and Joby Warrick, "For the 'Children of ISIS,' Target Practice Starts at Age 6. By Their Teens, They're Ready to Be Suicide Bombers," *Washington Post*, October 7, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/for-the-children-of-isis-target-practice-starts-at-age-6-by-their-teens-theyre-ready-to-be-suicide-bombers/2016/10/06/3b59f0fc-8664-11e6-92c2-14b64f3d453f_story.html (accessed March 19, 2019).
46. John G. Horgan, Max Taylor, Mia Bloom, and Charlie Winter, "From Cubs to Lions: A Six Stage Model of Child Socialization into the Islamic State," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 40, no. 7 (2017): 655–656.
47. Cf. William Bennett, John Diluio, and John Walters, *Body Count* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 21–34; David Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1996), 120–133, 299–332.
48. Colleen McCue et al., "The Islamic State Long Game: A Tripartite Analysis of Youth Radicalization and Indoctrination," *CTC Sentinel* 10, no. 8 (September 2017): 21–26.
49. Hassan, *Longing*, 19.
50. Hassan, *Longing*, 254.
51. Hassan, *Longing*, 254–255, citing Hamza Yusuf Hanson, "The Crisis of ISIS: A Prophetic Prediction," sermon delivered at the San Ramon Valley Islamic Center, September 12, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hj04B-yaxfk (accessed June 10, 2015); and Muhammad al-Yaqoubi, *Refuting ISIS*, 2nd ed. (Herndon: Sacred Knowledge), 2016.
52. "Open Letter to Dr. Ibrahim Awwad al-Badri alias 'Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi' and to the Fighters and Followers of the Self-Declared 'Islamic State,'" Lettertobaghdadi.com, September 19, 2014, http://www.lettertobaghdadi.com/pdf/Booklet-Combined.pdf.
53. Maher Chmaytelli and Ahmed Hagagy, "Allies Promise Iraq $30 Billion, Falling Short of Baghdad's Appeal," Reuters, February 14, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-reconstruction-ku/allies-promise-iraq-30-billion-falling-short-of-baghdads-appeal-idUSKCN1FY0TX (accessed March 15, 2019).
54. Krishnadev Calamur, "No One Wants to Help Bashar al-Assad Rebuild Syria," *Atlantic,* March 15, 2019, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/03/where-will-money-rebuild-syria-come/584935 (accessed March 15, 2019).

55. Hashem Osseiran, "Trump Says Saudi Arabia Will Assume U.S. Role in Funding Syrian Reconstruction," *National* (Abu Dhabi), December 24, 2018, https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/trump-says-saudi-arabia-will-assume-us-role-in-funding-syria-reconstruction-1.806119 (accessed March 19, 2019); Marwa Rashad, "UAE to Fund $50.4 Million Project to Rebuild Mosul's Grand al-Nuri Mosque," Reuters, April 23, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-unesco/uae-to-fund-50-4-million-project-to-rebuild-mosuls-grand-al-nuri-mosque-idUSKBN1HU2LO (accessed March 15, 2019).
56. For a detailed history of these events, see Lister, *The Syrian Jihad*.
57. Hassan Hassan, "A Hollow Victory over the Islamic State in Syria? The High Risk of Jihadi Revival in Deir ez-Zor's Euphrates River Valley," *CTC Sentinel* 12, no. 2 (February 2019): 1–5.
58. Al-Gamāʿah al-Islāmiyyah, *Initiative to Stop the Violence (Mubādarat waqf al-ʿunf): Sadat's Assassins and the Renunciation of Political Violence*, trans. Sherman L. Jackson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 69.

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1. Originally published as Abū Muḥammad al-Maqdisī, "Ḥawl Fatwā Muftī al-Saʿūdiyya bi-Shaʾn ʿal-ʿAmaliyyāt al-Istishhādiyya," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, 2001, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_5787.html, (accessed March 11, 2019). Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, born ʿIssam Muhammad Tahir al-Barqawi in 1959, is a Jihadi-Salafi jurist and theologian who is perhaps best known as the one-time spiritual mentor of Abu Musʿab al-Zarqawi—whom al-Maqdisi met while imprisoned and who himself would later establish the framework for ISIS. Like Turki Binʿali, al-Zarqawi would eventually receive public condemnation from al-Maqdisi for his applications of violence in support of creating a caliphate. For more on al-Maqdisi, see Wagemakers, *A Quietist Jihadi*.
2. Ellipses in the original text suggest that an editor removed the name of the questioner from the Arabic version.
3. Al-Maqdisi's usage of "idolaters" (*ṭawāghīt*, sing. *ṭaghūt*) is a conceptual modification of the qurʾanic concepts of idols, tyrants, and other forms of oppressive evil (cf. Qurʾan 2:256 and 4:51). It is likely that al-Maqdisi was also influenced by the interpretation of *ṭaghūt* offered by Muhammad ibn ʿabd al-Wahhab (1703–1792), whose categorizations include critiques of political and religious leadership that governs by other than the revealed law of God.
4. Al-Maqdisi does not specify the body of law to which he refers. One possible example, however, might be the charter of the United Nations. In chapter I, article 2, the charter reads: "All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state." For more, see UN General Assembly, Charter of the United Nations (October 24, 1945), https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-i/index.html. Such language suggests that all nations are to set aside the use of force as a primary mode of politics and diplomacy.

5. Qurʾan 2:207. The full verse reads: "And among mankind is one who sells his soul seeking God's Good Pleasure, and God is Kind unto His servants."
6. Qurʾan 9:111. The rest of the verse reads: "[It is] a promise binding upon Him in the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qurʾan. And who is truer to His pact than God? So rejoice in the bargain you have made. That indeed is the great triumph."
7. Al-Bukhārī, *Al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 4, 37. Al-Maqdisi is referring to the subject heading in the book of al-Bukhari's collection of prophetic narrations titled "The Book of Jihad and the Expeditions." Muhammad bin Ismaʿil al-Bukhari (810–870) was born in Bukhara (found today in Uzbekistan) but began studying prophetic narrative traditions in Mecca, Medina, Basra, and other towns in Asia. Along with Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, al-Bukhari is responsible for assembling one of the most widely recognized and canonized sources of Sunni prophetic traditions.
8. Here al-Maqdisi allows that other Muslims may consider someone to have exemplified the behaviors of a martyr but notes that exemplifying or recognizing those behaviors is not sufficient for the achievement of martyrdom.
9. Muwaffaq al-Dīn ibn al-Qudāma, *Al-Mughnī*, vol. 9, (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qāhira, 1388 [1968]), 288. Ibn al-Qudama (1147–1223) was known as a Hanbali jurisconsult, an ascetic, and a traditionalist theologian.
10. Readers will find the usage of "Jews" to be anti-Semitic. Given that al-Maqdisi issued this fatwa in response to events during the Second Intifada by Palestinians, when he refers to "the Jews," this is best read as reference to the nation-state of Israel. Later in the fatwa, he will use pejorative language to refer to the Jews as an entire group.
11. Qurʾan 8:60. In full, it reads: "And prepare for them what you can of strength [of arms] and horses tethered [for battle], frightening thereby the enemy of God and your enemy, and other besides them whom you know not. God knows them. Whatsoever you spend in the way of God shall be paid unto you in full. And you shall not be wronged."
12. Cf. ʿAlī bin Aḥmad ibn Ḥazm, *Al-Muḥallā bi-l-athār*, vol. 5 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), 344–345. Abu Ishaq al-Subayʿi (654–744) and al-Baraʾ bin ʿAzib (d. 690) were both among the followers of Muhammad and were early transmitters of prophetic narrations. Both men fought and served in the caliphate of ʿUthman (644–656). Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (d. 672) participated in all of Muhammad's raids (*ghazwāt*), fought in the conquest of Egypt, and participated in the invasion of Cyprus and the siege of Constantinople. Abu Musa al-Ashʿari (614–662?) was appointed by ʿUmar bin al-Khattab (the second caliph, r. 634–644) as the governor of Basra and oversaw the conquest of Khuzistan (today a province in western Iran) and Mesopotamia (corresponding to much of modern Iraq). Ibn Hazm (994–1064) was an Andalusian poet, jurist, philosopher, and theologian who worked within the Zahiri school of jurisprudence. He lived amid considerable political turmoil on the Iberian Peninsula.
13. Here "Romans" refers to Byzantine soldiers.
14. Al-Maqdisi summarizes these citations from al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 3, 20–21. Abu ʿAbd Allah Muhammad al-Qurtubi (d. 1272) was a Maliki jurist and theologian living in al-Andalus. The qurʾanic verse to which the people and Abu Ayyub refer is 2:195: "And spend in the way of God and do not, with your own hands, cast yourselves into ruin. And be virtuous. Truly God loves the virtuous."

15. Cf. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 28, 540. Taqi al-Din ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328) was a prolific author of theological and jurisprudential texts in the Hanbali school who lived amid Mongol attempts at ruling in Syria.
16. Muḥammad bin Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn al-Sarakhsī, *Sharḥ al-Siyar al-Kabīr*, vol. X (n.p.: Al-Sharikat al-Sharqiyya li-l-Iʿlanat, 1971), 1512. Al-Maqdisi cites Abu ʿAbd Allah al-Shaybani (738–828?) and Muhammad bin Ahmad Shams al-Din al-Sarakhsi al-Sarakhsi (d. 1090?), a Central Asian jurist, as examples of Hanafi jurisprudence on the question of immersing oneself in the enemy.
17. In this sentence, al-Maqdisi makes a rather sharp pun. The name of Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement in Palestine established in 1987 under the guidance of Ahmed Yassin (1937–2004) and Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi (1936–2004), is often written in English as a proper noun. Its name in Arabic, however, is an acronym and also a noun. *Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya*—Hamas—is also the word *ḥamās*, meaning either "courage," "enthusiasm," or "zeal." When al-Maqdisi speaks here, he states that those following false scholars are guilty of following a hollow enthusiasm, which is likely an overt reference to Hamas as well.
18. From 1994 to 1999, al-Maqdisi was imprisoned in al-Jafr prison in Jordan with his protégé, al-Zarqawi. See Warrick, *Black Flags*, 15–29; Wagemakers, *A Quietist Jihadi*, 42–45. Wagemakers, *A Quietist Jihadi*, 45–49, discusses al-Maqdisi's quick rearrest on suspicion of his involvement in several plots and the time period covering the imprisoned mentioned by al-Maqdisi.
19. Originally published as Ḥamūd bin ʿUqlāʾ al-Shuʿaybī, "Ḥukm al-ʿAmaliyyāt al-Istishhādiyya," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, 2001, http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/MS_5788.html (accessed February 28, 2018). Hamud bin ʿUqla al-Shuʿaybi (1927–2001) was a Saudi-born Islamic jurist and theologian whose ideas were embraced by al-Maqdisi and other Jihadi-Salafi authors. Al-Shuʿaybi, in the course of his work alongside the Sahwa movement in Saudi Arabia, was considered to have developed a school consisting of Nasir al-Fahd, ʿAli Khudayr al-Khudayr, Hamud al-Khaldi, and Sulayman al-ʿUlwan. For more on al-Shuʿaybi, see Hegghammer, *Jihad in Saudi Arabia*; Al-Sarhan, "The Struggle," 181–206.
20. Qurʾan 6:38. The full verse reads: "There is no creature that crawls upon the earth, nor bird that flies upon its wings, but that they are communities like yourselves—We have neglected nothing in the Book—and they shall be gathered unto their Lord in the end." Al-Shuʿaybi closes the paragraph paraphrasing a narration from Muhammad; cf. Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, *Musnad al-Imām Ibn Ḥanbal*, vol. 1, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 1416 [1995], 473. The full passage from the *Musnad* of Ibn Hanbal reads: "[The Qurʾan] reveals what came before you and provides clarification of what happens among you." Ibn Hanbal (780–855) was a traditionist, theologian, and jurist whose students later advanced a school of Islamic legal theory following his lead.
21. Qurʾan 2:207.
22. Al-Shuʿaybi relies on al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 3, 20–22, which provides the citation details from Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, and Ibn Hibban—all narrators of prophetic traditions. Abu ʿAbd Allah Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Qurtubi (d. 671/1273) was a

Cordoban Maliki jurist and exegete of the Qurʾan who lived during the decline of the Almohad Caliphate in al-Andalus. As a result of this experience, al-Qurtubi's *tafsīr* is frequently cited by Jihadi-Salafis as an example of how best to interpret the text at a time of a state of emergency. Abu Hurayra (d. 678–680?) was a companion of Muhammad known for his narrations. Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (d. 672) participated in all of Muhammad's raids (*ghazwāt*), fought in the conquest of Egypt, and participated in the invasion of Cyprus and the siege of Constantinople. ʿUmar bin al-Khattab (r. 634–644) was a companion of Muhammad and served as the second caliph, who oversaw the conquest of much of the Sasanid and Byzantine empires.

23. Qurʾan 9:111. The full verse reads: "Truly God has purchased from the believers their souls and their wealth in exchange for the Garden being theirs. They fight in the way of God, slaying and being slain. [It is] a promise binding upon Him in the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qurʾan. And who is truer to His pact than God? So rejoice in the bargain you have made. That indeed is the great triumph." Rather than quoting Ibn Kathir directly, al-Shuʿaybi is providing a summary of Ibn Kathir's commentary on this verse, which argues that this is applicable to all who struggle in God's path. Cf. Abū al-Fidāʾ Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm*, vol. 4, ed. Sāmī bin Muhammad Salāma (n.p.: Dār Ṭayyiba li-l-Nashr, 1420 [1999]), 218. Abu al-Fidaʾ ibn Kathir (1300?–1373) was a traditionist and qurʾanic commentator who was heavily influenced by the career of Ibn Taymiyya.
24. Qurʾan 8:60. The full verse reads: "And prepare for them what you can of strength [of arms] and horses tethered [for battle], frightening thereby the enemy of God and your enemy, and others besides them whom you know not. God knows them. Whatsoever you spend in the way of God shall be paid unto you in full. And you shall not be wronged."
25. Qurʾan 8:57.
26. Cf. Muslim, *Al-Musnad*, vol. 4, 2299–3000. In the narration, a young boy who possesses what appear to be divinely granted supernatural powers runs afoul of a king desiring said power for himself. After a series of attempts by the king to kill him, the boy finally relents and instructs the king about the necessary steps for a successful execution. Among those steps is to gather the villagers in a public place and to invoke the name of God while releasing an arrow at the boy's head. The result of this is a mass conversion of the king's subjects to the religion of the boy. For the relation of the "Story of the Youth" to the narrative of the Qurʾan and to traditions external to the Islamic tradition, see Cook, "The *Aṣḥāb al-Ukhdūd*." Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj (817/821?–875) was a traditionist who travelled across Egypt, Syria, the Hijaz, and Iraq to collect prophetic narrations. Along with al-Bukhari, al-Hajjaj is responsible for one of the major canonical prophetic narration Sunni collections.
27. This narration appears in several collections, among them, for example, al-Nisāʾī, *Al-Sunan*, vol. 7, 193.
28. Cf. al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Sunan*, vol. 9, 77; al-Sarakhsī, *Sharḥ al-Siyar*, 62; al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 2, 364; al-Ṭabarī, *Tarīkh al-Rusul*, vol. 3, 290–294. Al-Baraʾ bin Malik (d. 632) was the brother of Anas bin Malik (d. ca. 709–711), the author of the *Muwattaʾ* and the eponym of one of the four Sunni legal schools. Fighters loyal to Musaylima

bin Habib (d. 632), who was a claimant to prophethood following the death of Muhammad, killed al-Baraʾ bin Malik during the Battle of Yamama, which was one of several fought during the apostasy (*ridda*) wars won by the first Sunni caliph, Abu Bakr (d. 634). Ahmad bin al-Husayn al-Bayhaqi (994–1066) was a Persian traditionist and jurist of the Shafiʿi school. Muhammad bin Ahmad Shams al-Din al-Sarakhsi was a Hanafi jurist who lived and worked in Central Asia. Abu Jaʿfar al-Tabari (839–923) was a jurist and historian who lived and worked in Baghdad.

29. Cf. Muslim, *Al-Musnad*, vol. 3, 1432–1440. Salama ibn al-Akwaʾ (d. 693–694), along with al-Akhram al-Asadi (or Muhriz bin Nadla, d. 631) and Abu Qatada (d. 674), were companions of Muhammad whose reports laud their bravery. Here al-Shuʿaybi is likely referring to a time shortly after the peace treaty of Hudaybiyya (ca. 628) signed by Muhammad with the Quraysh tribe of Mecca. One morning, ʿUyayna bin Hasan—a member of Quraysh who opposed the Muslim community—raided the camels of Muhammad. Salama and those with him saw this and gave chase, harassing the would-be camel thieves. In the *Al-Musnad al-Sahih* of al-Hajjaj, Ibn Akwaʾ and Abu Qatada both receive praise from Muhammad for their actions.
30. Cf. Aḥmad bin Ibrāhīm bin Muḥammad ibn al-Naḥḥās, *Mashāriʿ al-Ashwāq ilā Maṣariʿ al-ʿUshāq*, vol. 1, ed. Idrīs Muḥammad ʿAlī and Muḥammad Khālid Isṭanbūlī (Beirut: Shārikat Dār al-Bashāʾir al-Islāmiyya, 1403 [1983]), 539–540. Ibn al-Nahhas (sometimes labeled al-Dumyati, d. 1411) fought amid the Mamlukes against Christian armies and navies in northern Egypt. His *Mashariʿ al-Ashwaq* is a two-volume topical text that addresses various questions related to warfare and combat. Al-Nahhas accepts numerous narrations in his work that many jurists would not consider authentic.
31. Ibn Abī Shayba, *Kitāb*vol. 6, 558; al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Sunan*, vol. 9, 78. Hisham bin ʿAmir al-Ansari was a well-regarded companion of Muhammad who advised ʿUthman against escalating conflict against ʿAli ibn Abi Talib, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law. Abu Bakr ʿAbd Allah ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Shayba (775–849) was an Iraqi traditionist and historian whose work later became influential for the Maliki school of jurisprudence.
32. Cf. Abū Muḥammad ʾAbd al-Malik ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawwiyya*, vol. 2, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, and ʿAbd al-Hafiẓ al-Shalabī, (Egypt: Sharikat Maktabat wa-Mutabiʿat Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-Awlāduhu, 1375 [1955]), 629; al-Naḥḥās, *Mashāriʿ*, vol. 1, 545. Abu Hadrad al-Aslami was a companion of Muhammad. He is sometimes referred to as Salama bin ʿUmar bin Abi Salama or ʿAbd bin ʿUmayr. Abu Muhammad ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Hisham (d. 828/833?) lived and worked in Egypt, where he produced a critical edition of the biography of Muhammad using the work of Ibn Ishaq (ca. 704–767).
33. Al-Naḥḥās, *Mashāriʿ*, vol. 2, 994–995. ʿAbd Allah bin Hanzala al-Ghasil al-Ansari (d. 683) was among the companions of Muhammad killed during the second civil war.
34. Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Sunan*, vol. 9, 77. The classification of the hadith as "raised" notes to the reader that there are flaws in the chain of transmission (*isnād*) of companions, followers, or later transmitters. This suggests that the hadith does not meet the highest grades of "widely transmitted" (*mutawāṭir*) or "sound" (*ṣaḥīḥ*) used by

Muslim traditionists to signal their degree of confidence in the authenticity of the narration. For a discussion of these grades in English, see Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shahrazūrī, *An Introduction to the Science of Ḥadīth*, trans. Eerik Dickinson (Reading, PA: Garnet, 2006). On the science and history of hadith collation, see Brown, *Hadith*.

35. See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, vol. 6, 393. Anas bin al-Nadr (d. 624) was a companion of Muhammad killed at the Battle of Uhud, whose body was severely mutilated but was reported by those present to have remained pleasantly fragrant after his death.
36. Al-Naḥḥās, *Mashāriʿ*, vol. 1, 557.
37. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, vol. 2, 319. This particular commentary appears in the section of the *Iḥyāʾ* referring to "commanding the right and forbidding the wrong" (*al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-nahy ʿan al-munkar*). The phrase appears in the Qurʾan in several chapters. Consider this passage of 3:110: "You are the best community brought forth unto mankind, enjoining right, forbidding wrong, and believing in God." Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058–1111) was a jurist, theologian, academic, mystical thinker, and religious reformer, who was born near Khurasan and spent much of his life in Baghdad. When al-Ghazali composed the *Iḥyāʾ*, he intended it not as a jurisprudential text but as a corrective to the excesses of jurisprudence; See Ebrahim Moosa, *Ghazālī and the Poetics of Imagination* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 115–116. Such a corrective, Michael Cook argues, allowed al-Ghazali to explore the "gray areas" of the law; see Cook, *Commanding Right*, 427–468. It is al-Ghazali's exploration of such gray areas that may motivate al-Shuʿaybi's citation of him here.
38. Al-Nawawī, *Al-Minhāj*, vol. 12, 173. The expedition of Dhu Qarad took place in 627. It was during this expedition that Salama ibn al-ʿAkwa gave chase to the camel thieves (see note 29).
39. Al-Nawawī, *Al-Minhāj*, vol. 13, 46. Note that in al-Nawawi's text, the term used for "immersion is *inghimār*, not *inghimās*. Muhyi al-Din Abu Zakariyya al-Nawawi (1233–1277) was a Shafiʿi jurist and traditionist who lived and worked in Syria.
40. Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 2, 363.
41. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 28, 546.
42. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Qāsim, *Ḥāshiyyat al-Rawḍ al-Murabʿ Sharḥ Zād al-Mustaqinʿ*, vol. 7, ed. ʿAbd Allāh bin ʿAbd al-Raḥmān bin ʿAbd Allāh bin Jibrīn (n.p., 1400 [1979]), 177.
43. The *ratio legis* (*ʿilla*) is part of the analogical reasoning that al-Shuʿaybi attempts to demonstrate through these citations. As he recognizes at the outset of the fatwa, martyrdom-seeking operations have not existed before. Al-Shuʿaybi therefore must find analogous situations to demonstrate their permissibility or impermissibility. The question of striking the human shield and the rationale behind the permissibility of such an act—the need to protect Muslim communities at the expense of a few slain Muslims—is analogous, al-Shuʿaybi argues, to the situation facing those pursuing martyrdom-seeking operations today.
44. Al-Bukhārī, *Al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 1, 6. Muhammad bin Ismaʿil al-Bukhari (810–870) was born in Bukhara (found today in Uzbekistan) but began studying prophetic narrative traditions in Mecca, Medina, Basra, and other towns in Asia. Along with al-Hajjaj,

al-Bukhari is responsible for assembling one of the most widely recognized and canonized sources of Sunni prophetic traditions.

45. Ibn Qudāma, *Al-Mughnī*, vol. 9, 287. Ibn Qudama al-Maqdisi (1147–1223) was known as an Hanbali jurisconsult, an ascetic, and a traditionalist theologian.
46. Al-Shuʿaybi mentions, in order, Qurʿan 68:35–36, Qurʾan 45:21, and Qurʾan 32:18.
47. Originally published as Abū Humām Bakr bin ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Atharī, [or Turkī al-Binʿalī], "Mā Ḥukm al-ʿAmaliyyāt al-Istishhādiyya," Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, n.d., http://www.ilmway.com/site/maqdis/FAQ/MS_35109.html (accessed February 25, 2018). The Shariʿa Council of the Minbar al-Tawhid wa-l-Jihad was established in its initial form in July 2005 by al-Maqdisi. However, the forum to which this particular fatwa was posted did not become active until 2009. In addition to al-Binʿali, there were eleven members of the council on the forum. For more on the council, see Wagemakers, "Protecting Jihad."
48. Of interest here is that the questioner, who is undoubtedly using a nickname (*kunya*), is a concerned mother, a woman, or is a man presenting himself as a woman. There is no evidence to suggest that her son "Abrar" is Abrar al-Kuwaiti (d. 2011), one of the couriers of Bin Ladin at his compound in Abottabad, Pakistan, who was killed in the US raid on the compound. Yusuf al-ʿUyayri (1974–2003), who was once the leader of al-Qaʿida in Saudi Arabia, wrote a fatwa discussing whether Khava Barayeva's attack in Chechnya was permissible. On al-ʿUyayri's work, see Meijer, "Yūsuf al-ʿUyairī."
49. It is unclear to which essay al-Binʿali refers. Neither the Minbar forum nor its website has a published file of the essay.
50. Qurʾan, 9:111. Note that al-Binʿali leaves the verse incomplete in his response. The rest of the verse reads: "[It is] a promise binding upon Him in the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qurʾan. And who is truer to His pact than God? So rejoice in the bargain you have made. That indeed is the great triumph." No explanation is given by al-Binʿali for omitting this, although there are at least two reasons he may have done so. First, he is simply citing the verse as an initial proof text. Second, he may be following the model of al-Maqdisi and al-Shuʿaybi, neither of whom cites the entire verse in his rulings.
51. Cf. Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, vol. 1, 565. This particular quote from Ibn Kathir (1300–1373)—a Hanbali exegete, theologian, jurist, and student of Ibn Taymiyya—is mentioned not in his discussion of the verse as part of the ninth chapter of the Qurʾan, "Repentance," but instead as part of his commentary on Qurʾan 2:207: "And among mankind is one who sells his soul seeking God's Good Pleasure, and God is Kind unto His servants." Ibn Kathir mentions in his commentary that these two verses, 9:111 and 2:207, are related. It is likely, therefore, that al-Binʿali is making a similar connection of the two.
52. Although al-Binʿali may be discussing al-Duri as a contemporary, it seems likely he is discussing a conversation during a course on qurʾanic recitation in which his unnamed teacher (perhaps al-Maqdisi) mentioned a qurʾanic reciter and companion of Muhammad, Abu ʿUmar Hafs bin ʿUmar al-Duri (d. ca. 860–861). This would explain his teacher's rhetorical question and answer, "Is it possible . . .? Yes, it is possible!"
53. Qurʾan 6:151. Al-Binʿali amends the verse. It reads in full: "Say, 'Come, I will recite that which your Lord has forbidden you: that you ascribe nothing as partner unto Him, and that you be virtuous toward parents, and that you slay not your children

for fear of poverty—We will provide for you and for them—and approach not the indecencies, whether outward or inward, and slay not the soul that God has made inviolable, save by right. This He has enjoined upon you, that perhaps you may understand."

54. The quote is taken from "The Global Islamic Resistance Call" of Abū Muṣʿab al-Sūrī; see al-Sūrī, "Al-Daʿwa, 1153–1154. Al-Suri, born Mustafa Setmariam Nasar in 1958 in Aleppo, Syria, is widely regarded as one of the most influential ideologues and strategists on both al-Qaʿida and ISIS. It is widely believed that he assisted in the planning of the 2004 Madrid bombings. For more on al-Suri, see Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*. As of the time of this translation, his current whereabouts are unknown. In this citation by al-Binʿali, al-Suri is speaking with Sayyid Imam al-Sharif (Dr. Fadl, ʿAbd al-Qadir bin ʿabd al-ʿAziz), an Egyptian national, born on August 8, 1950. Sayyid Imam is best known for his affiliation with (and later renunciation of) al-Zawahiri, the current head of al-Qaʿida. Like al-Suri's work, Sayyid Imam's *The Essentials of Making Ready for Jihad* is considered a classic of global jihadist thought; see al-Sharīf, *Al-ʿUmda*. For commentary on Sayyid Imam's project, see Lahoud, *The Jihadis' Path*, and for a discussion of Sayyid Imam's work with the Jamaʿa Islamiyya to renounce his calls for violence, see al-Gamāʾah al-Islāmīyah, *Initiative to Stop the Violence*.
55. Qurʾan 2:207. On the relation of this verse to Qurʾan 9:111 by al-Binʿali see note 50.
56. Al-Binʿali tells his readers to review the commentary of al-Qurtubi; he is likely referring to al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 3, 20–21. Abu ʿAbd Allah Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Qurtubi (d. 1273) was a Cordoban Maliki jurist and exegete of the Qurʾan who lived during the decline of the Almohad Caliphate in al-Andalus. As a result of this experience, al-Qurtubi's *tafsīr* is frequently cited by Jihadi-Salafis as an example of how best to interpret the text at a time of a state of emergency. Of the figures mentioned, ʿUmar bin al-Khattab (the second Sunni caliph, r. 634–44), Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (d. ca. 670), and Abu Hurayra (d. ca. 68) were all companions (*ṣaḥāba*) of Muhammad. Abu Dawud (b. 817–888), al-Tirmidhi (b. 825–892), Ibn Hibban (b. ca. 883/884–965), and Abu Abd Allah al-Hakim (933–1014) are noted traditionists responsible for collecting four highly regarded collections of prophetic narrations, or hadith.
57. Cf. Ibn Abī Shayba, *Kitāb* vol. 6, 558; al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Sunan*, vol. 9, 78. The narrations of both Ibn Abi Shayba and al-Bayhaqi agree that the companions of Muhammad present witnessed a man throwing himself against a large number of Byzantine forces arrayed in defense of Constantinople, but neither records the man's identity as Hisham bin ʿAmir al-Ansari, an assumption and inaccuracy of Binʿali's.
58. See note 55.
59. Qurʾan 8:60. Al-Binʿali amends the verse. In full, it reads: "And prepare for them what you can of strength [of arms] and horses tethered [for battle], frightening thereby the enemy of God and your enemy, and other besides them whom you know now. God knows them. Whatsoever you spend in the way of God shall be paid unto you in full. And you shall not be wronged."
60. Cf. Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām*, vol. 1, 327–328. Abu Bakr al-Jassas (917–981) and al-Shaybani were Hanafi jurists, followers of Abu Hanifa (d. 150/767), the eponym of the Hanafi school.

61. See appendix 2, al-Shuʿaybī, "Ḥukm," 2. Al-Shuʿaybi (1927–2001) was a Saudi Arabian mufti, critic of the Saudi monarchy, and a mutual admirer of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi.
62. Cf. al-Hajjāj, *Al-Musnad*, vol. 4, 2299–3000. It is unclear which collection al-Binʿali uses to affirm that al-Bukhari transmitted this narration, as it does not appear in the latter's canonical collection, *Al-Jāmiʿ al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ*. On the narrative of the youth and the king, see Cook, "The *Aṣḥāb al-Ukhdūd*."
63. Al-Binʿali is speaking generally about the response of prior jurists. This is not a direct quote.
64. Cf. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 28, 540. Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328) was a Hanbali jurist, theologian, and polymath. He is most well-known among Jihadi-Salafis for his fatwas opposing Mongol governance and condemning any ruler who refused to govern according to the Shariʿa.
65. Sulayman al-ʿUlwan (b. 1969) is a Saudi Salafi, a former student of al-Shuʿaybi, and was once an influential member of the Sahwa movement in Saudi Arabia. He is also known for a controversial series of fatwas. In 2000, he issued a fatwa in support of martyrdom operations in Israel. In 2001, he supported the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas by the Taliban in Afghanistan. In 2003, he called upon the Iraqi people to use martyrdom operations against the invading US forces. In 2013, he began a fifteen-year prison term in Saudi Arabia for sedition and facilitating the transfer of funds to al-Qaʿida in Iraq. It is unclear whether al-Binʿali is citing a personal conversation here. Al-ʿUlwan has two fatwas on the Minbar that discuss martyrdom operations; see al-ʿUlwān, "Ḥukm 1" and "Ḥukm 2."
66. The usage of "restore the religion" (*iḥyāʾ al-dīn*) is likely a gesture toward al-Ghazali's *Iḥyāʾ*, also cited by al-Shuʿaybi in his fatwa on martyrdom-seeking operations.
67. Al-Binʿali assumes that the reader may object: does the language of "pushing and shoving" in the narration not imply that they did not wish to die? His response suggests that he believes they willfully brought themselves forth, hastening to demonstrate their piety.
68. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 3, 253; Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, vol. 2, ed. Muḥammad Fuʾād ʿAbd al-Bāqī (n.p.: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyya, n.d.), 1337. Both differ slightly from each other. Ahmad bin Hanbal (780–855) was a jurist, theologian, and traditionist who is the eponym of the Hanbali school of jurisprudence. Ibn Majah (824–887) was a Shafiʿi traditionist and a collector of one of the final canonical collections of Sunni hadith.
69. Al-Binʿali provides a footnote here, but it is unclear to which quotes he refers. The note reads: "See *Rawḍat al-Nāẓir* 1/400, *Tafsīr* Ibn Kathīr, 2/64, the *Mukhtaṣar* of Ibn al-Laḥām p. 161, *Sharḥ al-Kawkab al-Munīr* 4/412, etc]." The first text, a text on legal methodology and theory titled *Rawḍat al-Nāẓir*, was authored by Ibn Qudāma al-Maqdisī (1147–1223), a Hanbali jurisconsult, traditionalist, and ascetical practitioner. Ibn al-Laḥām (1351–400), the author of a summary of Islamic legal jurisprudence titled *Al-Mukhtaṣar fī Uṣūl al-Dīn*, was a Hanbali traditionist and jurisconsult. The *Sharḥ al-Kawkab al-Munīr*, a text on Islamic legal theory, was penned by Ibn al-Najjar (d. 972/1565), a Hanbali jurist and traditionist. Without

having a quote or information on the editions consulted by al-Binʿali, it is difficult to estimate which texts and quotes he cites here.

70. Similar to the quotation above, al-Binʿali does not clarify to which text of al-ʿUlwan's he refers. There is an assumption made by this citation, however. Al-Binʿali understands this quote to say that the law appears at all times the same. In his understanding of jurisprudence, then, there is a single, unchanging set of legal objectives. Human attempts at jurisprudence attempt to rectify human behavior to this standard.
71. Cf. Muslim, *Al-Musnad*, vol. 3, 1503.
72. Cf. Sulayman al-ʿUlwan, "Raʾi al-Shaykh Sulaymān al-ʿUlwān," in *al-Fatawa al-Nadiyya fi al-ʿAmaliyyat al-Istishhadiyya* (n.p.: Al-Maktab al-Shamela, 2011), http://shamela.ws/rep.php/book/1430 (accessed February 25, 2018), 15.
73. Al-Binʿali includes the following footnote: "Narrated by Ibn Abī Shayba, Al-Ṭabarānī, Abū Yaʿlā, Ibn al-Mubārak in *Jihād*, and Abū Nuʿaym in al-Ḥaliyya" Cf. ibn Abī Shayba, *Kitāb*, vol. 4, 207; Abū al-Qāsim al-Ṭabarānī, *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn*, vol. 1, ed. Ḥamdī bin ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Salafī (Beirut: Muʾasasat al-Risala, 1405 [1984]), 307; Abū Yaʿlā, *Abṭāl al-Ṭāʾwīlāt*, ed. Muḥammad bin Ḥamd al-Ḥamūd al-Najdī (Kuwait: Dār ʾĪlāf al-Dawliyya, n.d.), 215; al-Mubārak, *Kitāb*, 58. In Abū Nuʿaym Aḥmad bin ʿAbd Allāh al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥalliyat al-ʾŪliyāʾ wa-Ṭabaqāt al-Aṣfiyāʾ*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1416 [1997]), 291, the narration includes only a discussion of the martyrs in the highest rooms of paradise. There is no mention made of the laughter of God. Ibn Abi Shayba was a Sunni traditionist and historian; among his pupils was Ibn Majah. Al-Tibarani (873–971) was a Sunni traditionist and historian who counted among his students Abu Nuʿaym al-Isbahani (947–1038). Abu Nuʿaym was a traditionist who had a measured influence on Sufism and came from a long line of Iranian ascetics. Ibn al-Mubarak (118/726–181/797) was an early Muslim traditionist and ascetic who had influence on the early development of theories of jihadi, asceticism, and Sufism. Abu Yaʿla (Ibn al-Farraʾ, 990–1066) was a Hanbali jurist, traditionist, and theologian. The narrator of this report, Abu Saʿid al-Khudri (612–693) was one of the youngest helpers (*anṣār*) in Medina and among the youngest companions of Muhammad.
74. Al-Binʿali includes the following footnote: "Reported by Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nisāʾī, and Aḥmad." See al-Sijistānī, *Sunan*, vol. 4, 246; al-Tirmidhī, *Al-Jāmiʾ*, vol. 4, 30; al-Nisāʾī, *Al-Sunan*, vol. 3, 455; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 3, 190. The declaration by al-Binʿali that in his estimation and in his reading of tradition, this narration is "sound" (*ṣaḥīḥ*) is a declaration that Islamic traditionists consider this narration to meet all content- and chain-of-transmission-based criteria for it to be considered an authentic statement of Muhammad.
75. Cf. al-ʿUlwan, "Raʾī," 15.
76. Al-Binʿali includes the following footnote: "Narrated by Ahmad, al-Bayhaqi, and so on." Cf. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 11, 398; al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Sunan*, vol. 4, 302. ʿAmr ibn ʿAbasa was one of the companions of Muhammad in Mecca and Medina.
77. Cf. Ibn Abī Shayba, *Kitāb*, vol. 4, 233; Ibn Ḥazm, *Al-Muḥallā*, vol. 5, 345; al-Ṭabarī, *Tarīkh*, vol. 2, 448–449; Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat Ibn Hisham*, vol. 2, ed. Ṭaha ʿabd Al-Ruʾūf

Saʿd (n.p.: Sharikat al-Ṭabāʿa al-Fanniyya al-Mutaḥida, n.d.), 196. Ibn Hazm (994–1064) was a Zahiri philosopher, jurist, poet, and theologian. Abu Jaʿfar al-Tabari (839–923) was a polymath whose works included histories, legal theory, and theology. Ibn Hisham (d. ca. 833) is perhaps best known as a biographer of Muhammad who both preserved and omitted within his own work the material of an earlier biographer, Ibn Ishaq (704–767). Both ʿAsim bin Muhammad Qatada and Muʿadh bin ʿAfraʾ were among the companions of the prophet.

78. Muslim, *Al-Musnad*, vol. 3, 1509–1510.
79. Al-Nawawī, *Al-Minhāj*, vol. 13, 46. Muhyi al-Din Abu Zakariyya al-Nawawi (1233–1277) was a Shafiʿi jurist and traditionist who lived and worked in Syria. Note that in al-Nawawi's text, the term used for immersion is *inghimār*, not *inghimās*.
80. Qurʾan 2:195.
81. Cf. Muḥammad Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān bi-Tartīb Ibn Bulbān*, vol. 11, ed. Shuʿayb al-Arnuʾūṭ (Beirut: Muʾasasat al-Risāla, 1414 [1993]), 9; al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 2, 119. Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Hibban (883/884–965) was a prolific writer and traditionist who traveled extensively throughout Central Asia and the eastern Mediterranean. Nasir al-Din al-Albani (1914–1999) was an Albanian traditionist trained in the Islamic legal sciences. Al-Albani critiqued the four main Sunni schools of jurisprudence and argued for the necessity of following the precedent of the Salaf in his time. On al-Albani's impact on contemporary Salafi politics, see Lacroix, "Between Revolution and Apoliticism."
82. Al-Binʿali includes the following footnote: "*Ṣaḥīḥ Mawārid al-Ẓamān ilā Zawāʾid Ibn Ḥibbān*," which encourages the reader to consult al-Albani's commentary on the narrations of Ibn Hibban (see note 81 above).
83. Ibn al-Mubārak, *Kitab*, 137.
84. Cf. Muḥammad ibn Ḥabbān, *Al-Thaqāt li-Ibn Ḥabbān*, vol. 2, ed. Muḥammad ʿabd al-Muʿīd Khān (Hyderabad: Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1393 [1973]), 175; al-Ṭabarī, *Tarīkh*, vol. 3, 290–294.
85. Cf. Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat Ibn Hishām*, vol. 2, 629; Ibn al-Naḥḥās, *Mashāriʿ*, vol. 1, 545.
86. Ibn al-Naḥḥās, *Mashāriʿ*, vol. 2, 994–95.
87. Al-Bayhaqī, *Kubrā*, vol. 9, 77.
88. See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, vol. 6, 393.
89. Cf. Muslim, *Al-Musnad*, vol. 3, 1433.
90. Cf. Ibn al-Naḥḥās, *Mashāriʿ*, vol. 1, 540.
91. Ibn Abī Shayba, *Kitāb*, vol. 4, 208.
92. Ibn al-Naḥḥās, *Mashāriʿ*, vol. 1, 557; al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, vol. 2, 319. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058–1111) was a jurist, theologian, academic, mystical thinker, and religious reformer who was born near Khurasan and spent much of his life in Baghdad.
93. Al-Nawawī, *Al-Minhāj*, vol. 12, 173.
94. The narration cites Qurʾan 4:84. The full verse reads: "So fight in the way of God. Thou art accountable only for thyself, and urge on the believers. It may be that God will restrain the might of the disbelievers, for God is stronger in might and more severe in punishment."
95. Cf. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 30, 427.

96. Cf. al-Ṭabarī, *Tarīkh*, vol. 3, 39.
97. Cf. Ibn al-Mubārak, *Kitāb*, 62; al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Sunan*, vol. 9, 76.
98. Abū al-Qāsim ibn ʿAsākir, *Tarīkh Dimashq*, vol. 68, ed. ʿAmrū bin Ghurāma al-ʿAmrawī (Riyadh: Dār al-Fikr, 1415 [1995]), 101. While the narration provided by al-Binʿali matches the text, al-Binʿali erroneously records the chain of transmission [*isnād*].
99. Al-Shuʿaybī, "Ḥukm," 5.
100. Abū al-Fidāʾ ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāya wa-l-Nihāya*, vol. 4, ed. ʿAlī Shīrī (n.p.: Dār Iḥyāʾal-Turāth al-ʾArabī, 1408 [1988]), 39.
101. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tarīkh*, vol. 4, 530.
102. Al-ʿUyayrī, "Hal Intaḥarat," 15.
103. Al-Binʿali erroneously states that this passage is from al-Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr*. The passage to which al-Binʿali refers, which he summarizes here, is from al-Ṭabarī, *Tarīkh*, vol. 3, 454–459.
104. Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāya*, vol. 7, 15.
105. Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāya*, vol. 12, 417–418.
106. Here al-Binʿali refers to the narrative of Samson found in the Hebrew Bible (Judges 13:24–16:31, NRSV; Hebrews 11:32-34, NRSV), where he is lauded for his bravery.
107. Al-Shāfiʿī, *Al-Umm*, vol. 4, 178.
108. Muḥammad bin Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn al-Sarakhsī, *Al-Mabsūṭ*, vol. 10 (Beirut, Dār al-Maʿrifa, 1414 [1993]), 76.
109. Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 2, 363.
110. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwa*, vol. 25, 279.
111. Al-Shuʿaybī, "Ḥukm," 6.
112. It is unclear whether al-Binʿali is referring to the text of a fatwa or to public remarks by ʿAbd Allah bin ʿAbd al-Rahman bin Jibrin (1933–2009), as this quote does not appear in any fatwas published by him, and Ibn Jibrin was vocally opposed to the September 11, 2001, attacks. Ibn Jibrin was a member of the Senior Clerics Association and the Permanent Committee for Islamic Research and Issuing Fatwas in Saudi Arabia. For more on Ibn Jibrin, who was a contemporary of Hamud bin ʿUqla al-Shuʿaybi, see Lacroix, *Awakening Islam*, 169–170.
113. Al-ʿUlwān, "Raʾī," 12.
114. ʿAlī bin Khuḍayr al-Khuḍayr, "Raʾī al-Shaykh ʿAlī Khuḍayr al-Khuḍayr," in *Al-Fatāwā al-Nadiyya fī al-ʿAmaliyyāt al-Istishhādiyya* (n.p.: Al-Maktab al-Shāmila, 2011), http://shamela.ws/rep.php/book/1430 (accessed February 25, 2018), 20.
115. See note 112 for citation information.

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